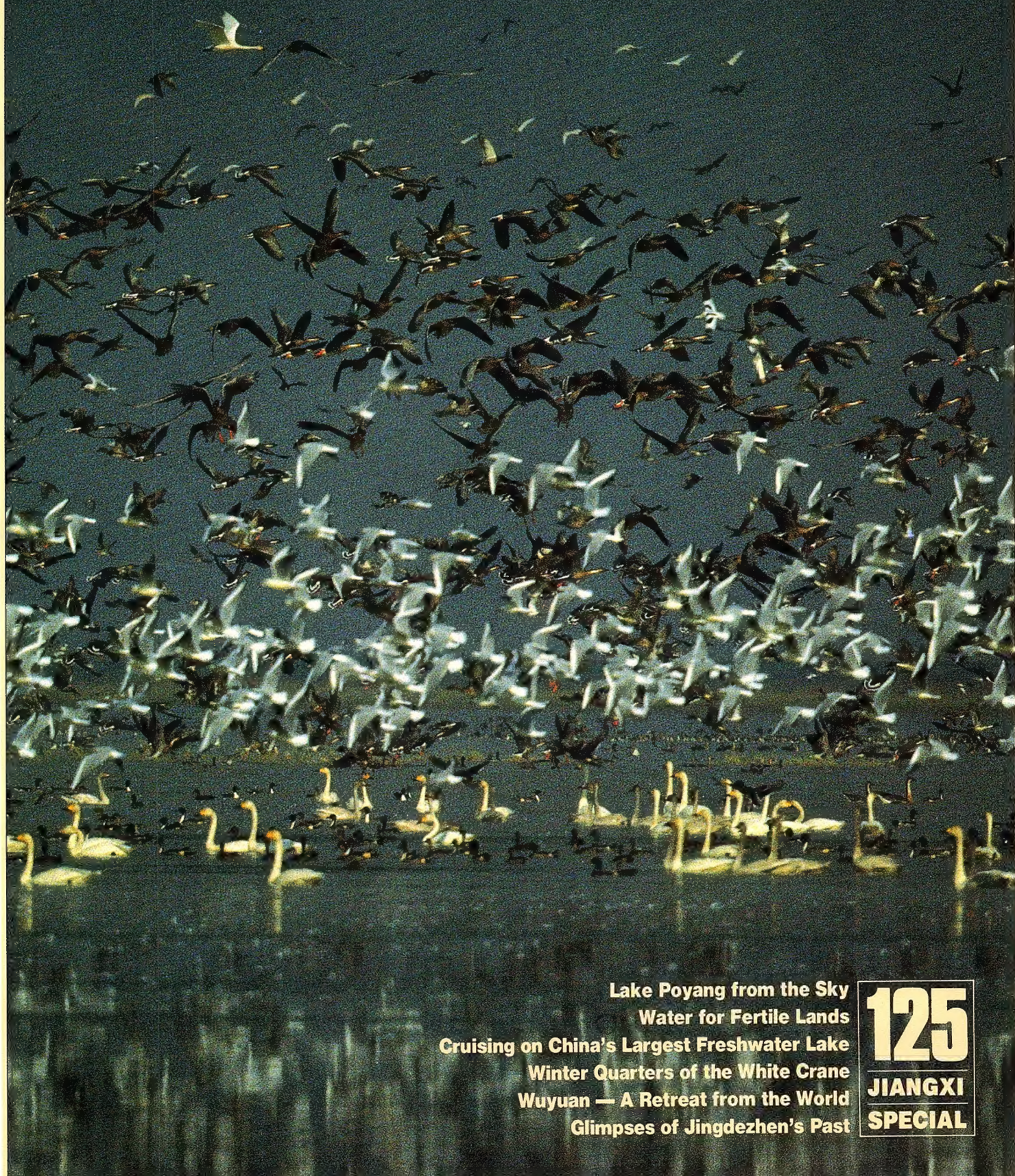
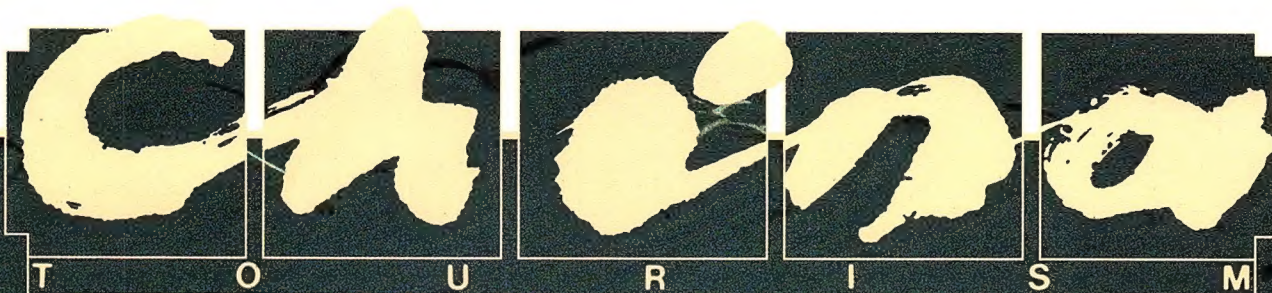




Lake Poyang from the Sky
Water for Fertile Lands
Cruising on China's Largest Freshwater Lake
Winter Quarters of the White Crane
Wuyuan — A Retreat from the World
Glimpses of Jingdezhen's Past

125
JIANGXI
SPECIAL

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EDITORIAL

Land of Tea, Fish and Ceramics

Although we have termed this issue a 'Jiangxi Special', the emphasis is firmly on the northern part of the province — on the area around Lake Poyang and the well-watered lands to its east.

As we point out in Travel Notes, this area lies not far southwest of Mount Huangshan and Huizhou Prefecture in Anhui, offering a number of tantalizing possibilities for tour combinations. Readers of our Southern Anhui Special (CHINA TOURISM no. 90) will in fact note similarities between the traditional domestic architecture featured in that issue and the examples preserved in villages all over Jiangxi's Wuyuan County. Preservation of the past also plays a role in Jingdezhen's abiding interest for the visitor, an interest which will be felt all the more keenly by those who have admired the magnificent ceramic products of its Ming and Qing-dynasty imperial kilns in museums throughout the world.



Li Qing



Wu Dongshuang



Wu Dongshuang



Li Qing

No. 125 NOVEMBER 1990

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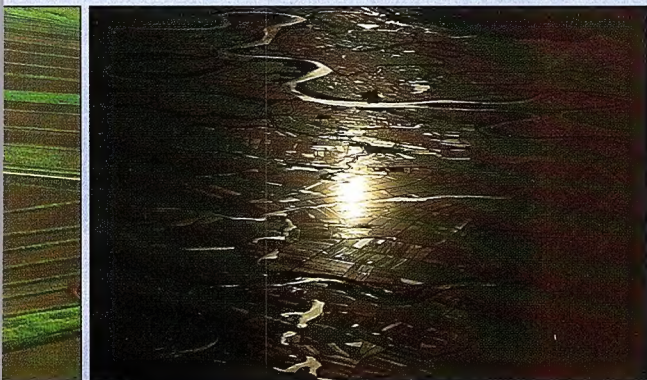
Lovers of natural beauty will find no shortage of places to visit in the north of Jiangxi ... Mount Lushan – favoured by Chinese poets, scholars, Taoists and Buddhists for over a thousand years – and Lake Poyang being just the most obvious.

The latter is China's largest freshwater lake, providing a living for many fishing communities. But the lake's swamps and marshlands also provide the ideal winter habitat for over 100,000 migratory birds, among them the white or Siberian crane, the hooded crane and the white-naped crane. Increasingly, the Chinese tourism authorities are catering for natural history buffs. Our reporter joined a bird-watching tour at the Migratory Birds Conservation Zone headquarters at Wucheng.

We hope you enjoy our presentation of a region which deserves to be more widely known. Modern Jiangxi is developing a strong industrial base, since it is as rich in mineral resources as in arts and crafts, yet it conceals some precious nuggets of traditional Chinese life.



Li Qing



Wu Dongshuang

58 Behind the Yamen Gate Neixiang in southwestern Henan is the site of a *yamen*, offices of the local magistrate, which throws light on the judicial system of the imperial era.

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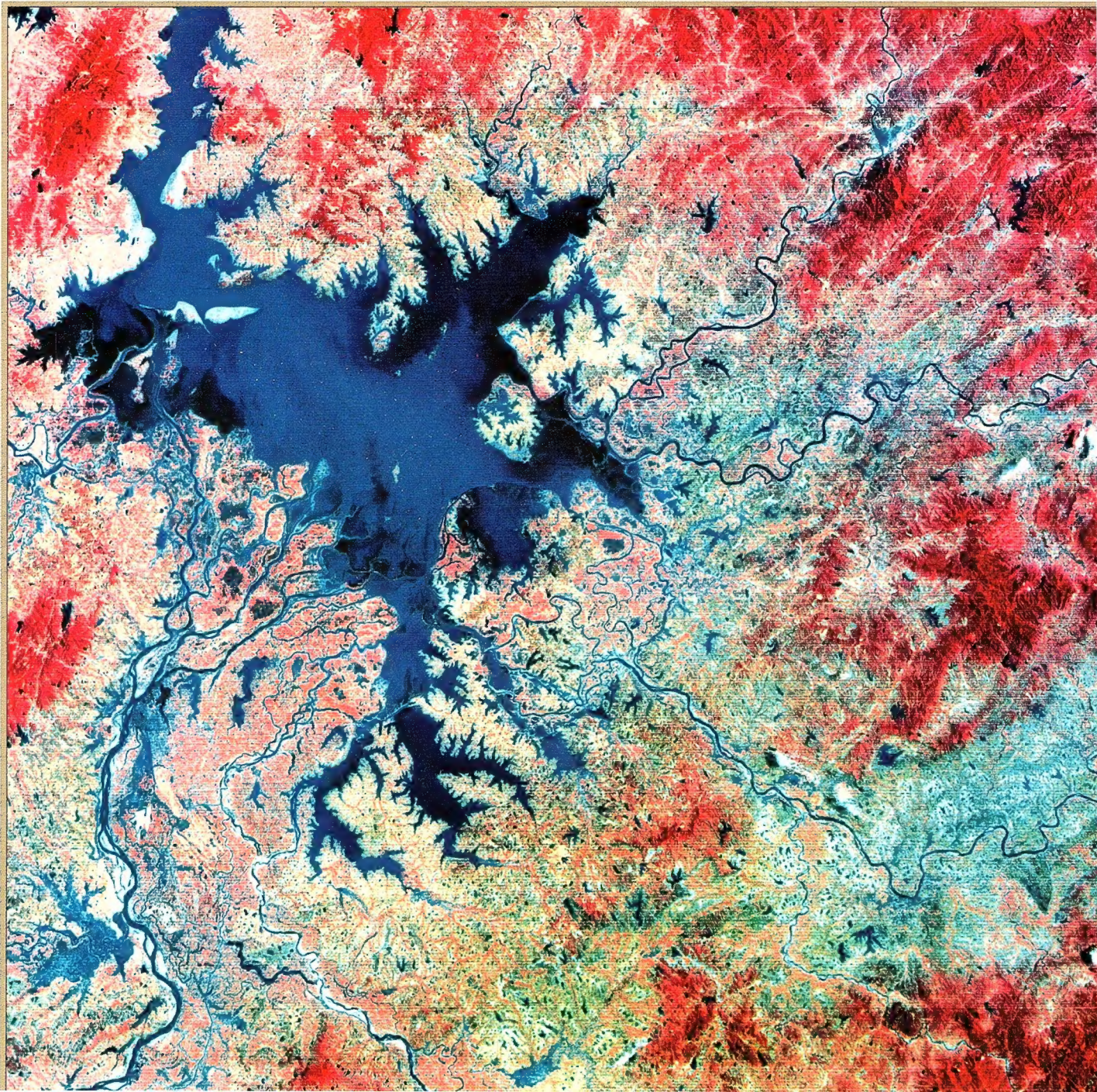
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Lake Poyang from the Sky

TEXT BY YE FENG



Lake Poyang was formerly known as Penglize. Towards the end of the Sui dynasty (581–618), it increased dramatically in volume, extending as far as Mount Poyang in present-day Boyang County; hence the name change.

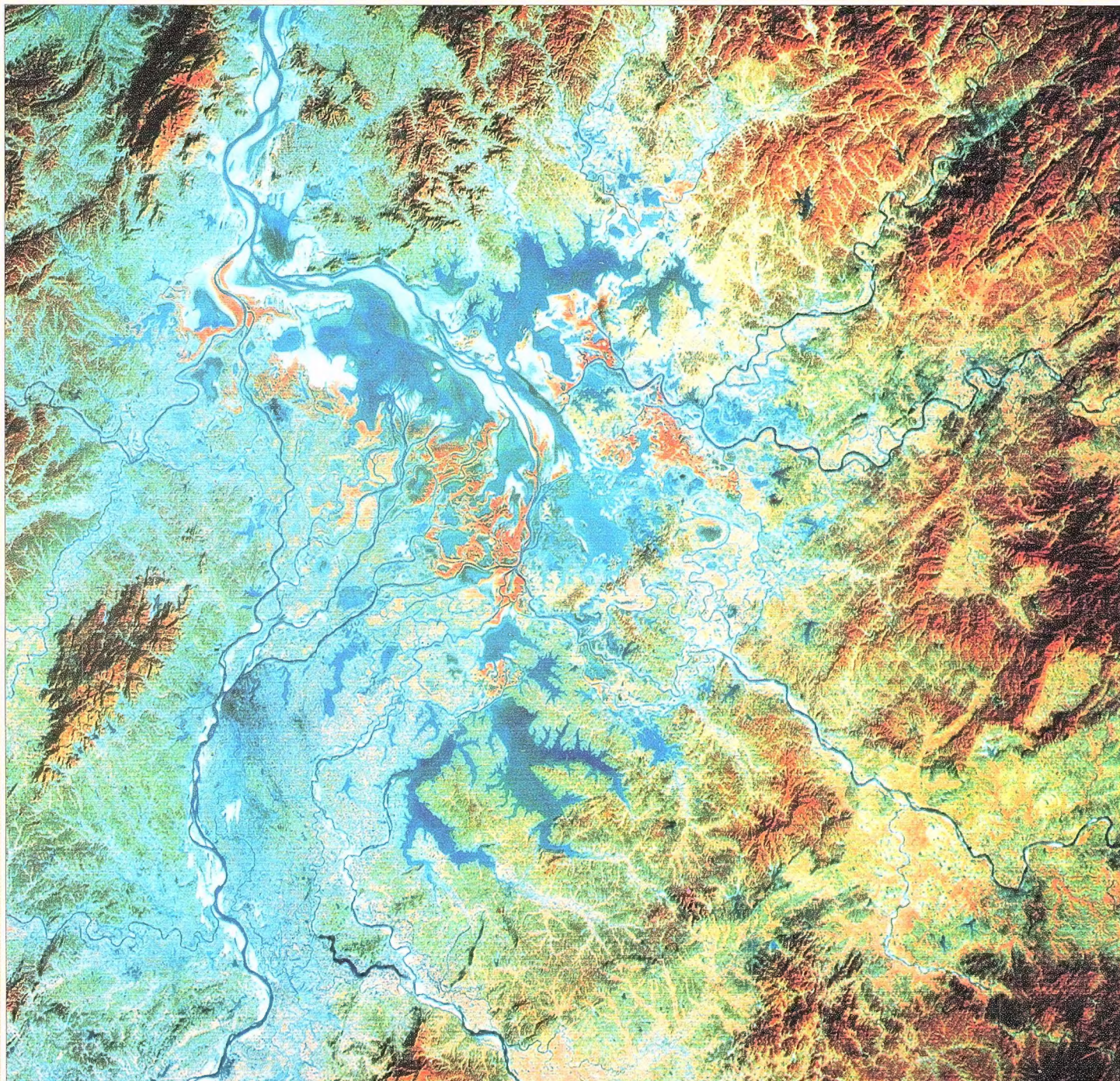
With a summer area of around 3,900 square kilometres, the lake receives the waters of five major rivers of Jiangxi: the Ganjiang, the Fuhe, the Xinjiang, the Xiushui and the Pojiang (the old name of this latter being the Raohe). It is China's largest freshwater lake. The flow of water is from south to north; the lake empties itself into the River Yangtse via Hukou, a narrow channel like the mouth of a gourd.

From space, Lake Poyang looks something like an amoeba, swelling then contracting according to season. In winter, great tracts of the lake's bed are exposed along with the labyrinth of swamps which form a welcome refuge for thousands of migratory birds. In summer, the monsoon rains swell the rivers which pour into the lake, increasing its area enormously. This phenomenon is very clear from these satellite pictures.



Translated by Anne Yan

In summer, the swollen lake overflows its banks (1) while, in winter, it may contract to only one-eighth the area (2) (satellite pictures supplied by Wu Dongshuang).





Water for Fertile Lands

TEXT BY YE FENG





2

The regions along the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtse, China's longest river, contain enormous freshwater reserves in a multitude of lakes. There are more than 1,200 of them, the largest being Poyang, Dongting, Chaohu and Taihu. Some, like Taihu, are of marine origin, but Lake Poyang was created by land subsidence as a result of tectonic movements. Its waters are shallow, its bed flat and raised ... the consequence of centuries of deposition of successive layers of silt.

Lake Poyang plays a very important role in regulating water levels and storing floodwaters, like a gigantic reservoir. It absorbs up to a third of all Jiangxi's floodwaters.

The water levels in the lake are highest in April, May and June. In winter, the lake may dwindle to just a trickle of water in places. At this time, the exposed marshlands with their insects and micro-organisms provide excellent feeding grounds for the wintering migrants from northern Asia.

Although Jiangxi Province lies on a latitude dominated, in other parts of the world, by deserts (but also the Himalayan Mountains!), it is open to the influence of the warm, wet southeast monsoons. This means that, in April, it receives the 'plum rains', the spring rains of southeastern China caused by the initial clash between the warm monsoon and the cold polar front. Jiangxi receives an annual 1,500 millimetres of rainfall and has well-marked seasons. The summer here is hot, with temperatures rising to 30–35°C.

All this translates into considerable agricultural activity in the areas bordering Lake Poyang. These rich, fertile lands are known as one of China's 'ricebowl' regions.

The shores are heavily indented, forming a series of bays and peninsulas (1, by Wu Dongshuang). Not an inch of land escapes cultivation except for the hayrick enclosures (2, by Li Qing).



1

The lakeside is banded with vegetation zones. At the lowest level, flooded in the summer months, we find marshlands. Meadows follow at between fourteen and eighteen metres above water-level. Paddy fields have been laid out at from eighteen to thirty metres above the water. On the higher land are other crops in fields surrounded by mud walls to retain soil and keep the floodwaters out.

One of the most striking features of Jiangxi is the colour of its soil (see CHINA TOURISM no. 124). This rather heavy, acidic soil can be turned into good arable land with considerable effort, however, and — apart from rice — products include cotton, wheat, tea, tea-oil, tung-oil, citrus fruit, bamboo, turpentine and camphor.

The lake was once a much busier place than it is nowadays. Some of its ports were major communications centres, entrepôts for the goods produced in the region. Barges and junks laden with tea, grains, silks, and pottery and porcelain wares from the kilns at Jingdezhen would once have plied its waters. With the coming of the railway early this century, however, trade declined and some ports lost not just their prosperity but their reason for existence.

Still, even if the merchants have departed, the fisherfolk remain. Apart from the natural abundance of fish in the lake, immense fish farms have sprung up around it in recent years. Xingzi County, for example, has been given funds by the United Nations' Food & Agricultural Organization to transform 30,000 *mu* (about 2,000 hectares) of lake into fish farms, concentrating on sundry types of carp. Hukou County is well served by its freshwater crabs, a

'Badlands' of red earth resist domestication but are gradually being reafforested (1, by Li Qing). Field terraces are surrounded by mud walls acting as dykes (2, by Wu Dongshuang).





seasonal delicacy which is much appreciated in the restaurants of Hong Kong, among other places, bringing in foreign currency for further expansion.

The hills and mountains around the lake are just as productive, with numerous mines and quarries. The area's rich reserves of copper account for about a third of China's total. Copper mines and a processing plant have been set up in Jiujiang, Shangrao, Fuzhou and Yingtan. To the west, in Shanggao County, there are heavily worked marble quarries. Jiangxi's water and mineral resources are gradually developing it beyond its agricultural riches to an industrial base.

©

Translated by Anne Yan

Certain districts around the lake are mountainous, so only the valleys are cultivated (1). In early spring, the lake's shallows are still exposed (2) (both by Li Qing).





Cruising on China's Largest Freshwater Lake

PHOTOS BY WU DONGSHUANG

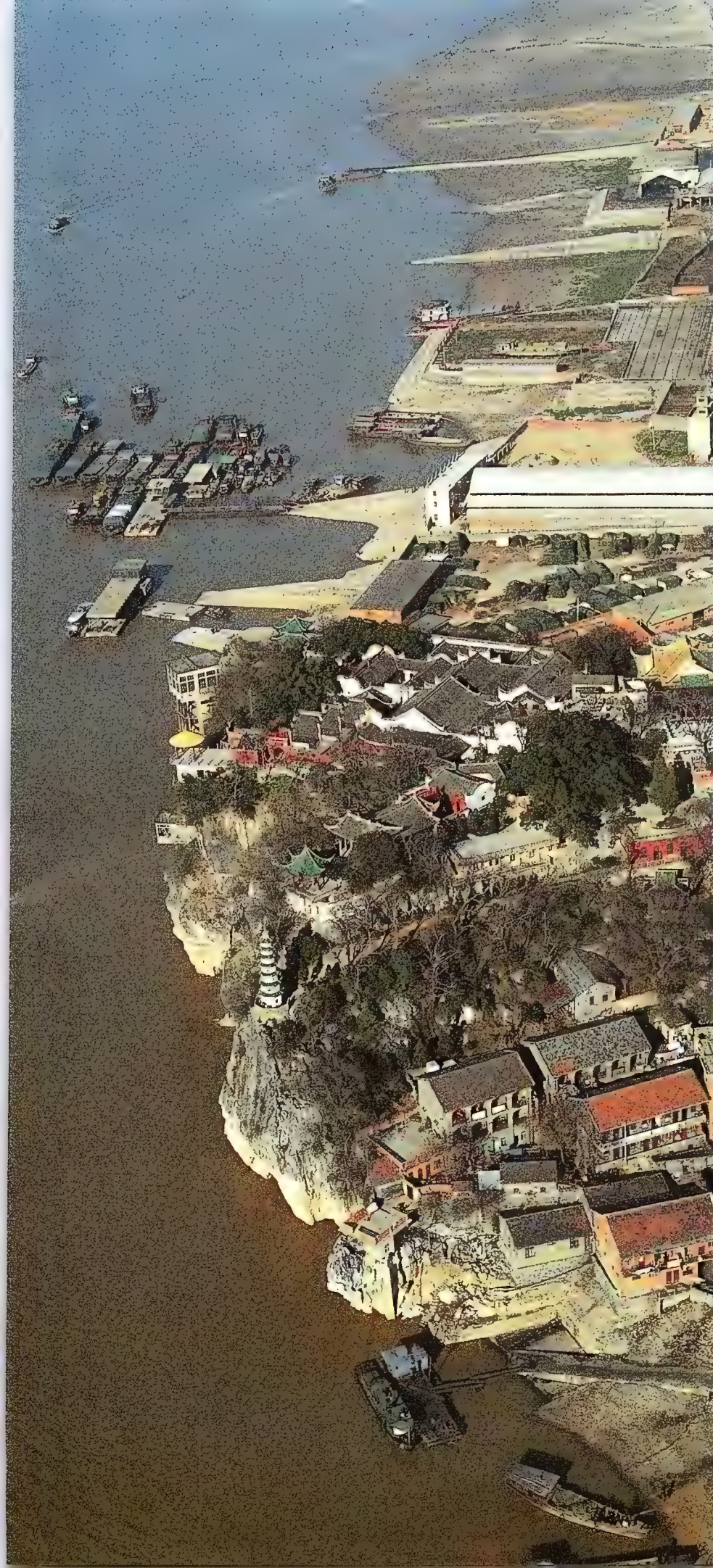
ARTICLE BY XI DAN



1



2



In early November last year I arrived in Jiujiang from Nanchang, capital of Jiangxi Province, hoping to tour Lake Poyang before the onset of winter. Little Lü, the guide sent to meet me by the travel agency which organized my trip, said that we would be entering the lake from the River Yangtse. He had already booked seats on a pleasure-boat.

We sped by car through the busy streets of Jiujiang on our way to the No. 7 Wharf. The boats of various sizes moored there made the place a scene of bustling activity ... all against the backdrop of the vast Yangtse. Jiujiang is the main trading port on the river in Jiangxi. Autumnal tints were everywhere and both banks of the river were enveloped in fog — it was impossible to see the opposite bank.

We embarked on a boat about thirty-three metres long. We were to make a circuit of the lake on this boat, the *Lushan*. We would stop at places on the way to see the sights and also spend the nights ashore.

Our boat left the wharf and skirted the right bank of the river. Braving the strong wind, I stood on the deck near the prow full of excitement at the



4

Renowned in history (1), the lake runs through a narrow outlet to the Yangtse at Hukou (2) (both by Tai Chi Yin). Mount Shizhong — in fact the merest hill (3) — opposite Hukou, and an entranceway in the town (4).

3





thought of travelling on China's longest river to reach the country's biggest freshwater lake.

We had cruised downstream for about two hours when the captain on the bridge pointed to a certain spot on the right bank and said to me: 'That's our first destination – Mount Shizhong in Hukou County.'

Hukou's Stone Bell Hill

Hukou (Lake Mouth) is at the northern end of Lake Poyang where it empties into the Yangtse. Mount Shizhong (Stone Bell) is situated on the eastern side of Hukou, overlooking the place where the lake and the river unite.

The great Song-dynasty poet Su Dongpo (1037-1101) moored his boat under the cliff here on several occasions and later wrote a famous essay entitled *Mount Shizhong Travel Notes* which has become a classic of Chinese literature. In this essay Su describes lyrically how the caves under the mount are full of crevices and how, when the wind forces waves into them, pounding against the roof and walls of the caves, they emit a sound reminiscent of chiming bells.

Our boat berthed at the passenger wharf at the mount's foot and we all disembarked.

The 'mount' is, in fact, a mere hill, only some fifty metres high. It has precipitous cliffs and rocks in grotesque shapes and patches of vegetation. Since the Tang and Song dynasties (618-1279) many terraces and pavilions have been built here. As we walked up the steps, we passed buildings erected mainly in the last years of Emperor Xianfeng (reign dates 1851-1861) of the Qing dynasty when the leader of the Taiping Rebellion, Shi Dakai, made this hill his stronghold between 1853 and 1857. It is said that, when the Qing war-junks came looking for the rebels, the latter stretched ropes across the mouth of the lake, cutting the Qing navy in two and defeating them. The Qing general Zeng Guofan tried to drown himself at this appalling loss of face, but was dissuaded from doing so by his retinue.

The most attractive spot is the pavilion on the summit designed to 'see the river and the sky at a glance', and it is named accordingly. It has a fantastic view over the river and the lake. The waters of the lake are blue, those of the river a murky yellow. Where they meet at Hukou, the two colours extend distinctly side by side for 25 kilometres, like colourful silk bands, before merging.

We had taken our hand luggage with us and put up for the night at a hotel in Hukou.

The 'Mystery Zone'

The next morning, at daybreak, the captain rounded us up in a hurry to resume the journey. From the narrows our boat advanced south into the lake past towering cliffs and rough crags which seemed as sharp as if they had been cut with a knife. The currents here were turbulent and there were numerous shoals; our captain took the helm in person.

As we headed deeper into the lake, the narrow channel expanded into a vast body of water. It was early winter and the lake waters were only about one-eighth of the volume in summer. Still, we found it an inspiring sight. The lake seemed larger owing to the fact that the water and the sky were the same colour, without any obvious demarcation line.

Plaques on a wall at the Laoye Temple (1), expressions of thanks and devotion from the fisherfolk who make their living from the lake (2). Salvaging the result of a lake accident (3, by Tai Chi Yin), and the comfortable cabin of a larger boat (4, by Guo Jiasheng).

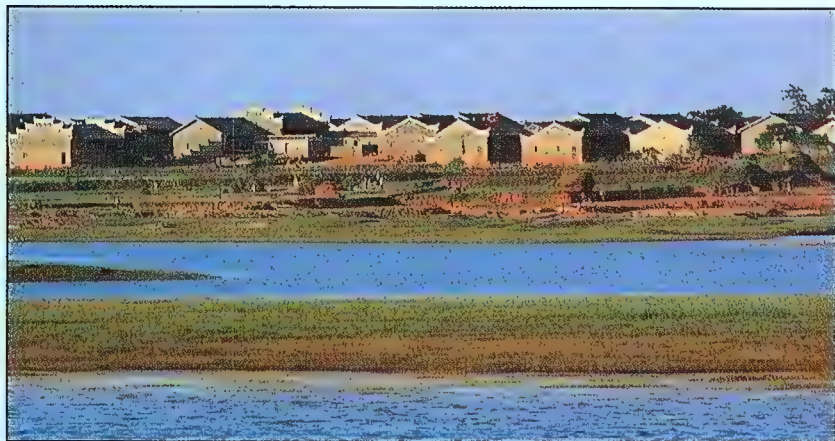




1



2



3



4

Strictly following the course indicated on the chart, our boat continued parallel to the bank; a triangular buoy every three hundred metres marked the channel. The captain told me that in winter, even in the middle at the deepest point, the lake is only about ten metres deep. The channel we were following was little more than one metre deep. Seeing that I was not convinced, he asked a crew member to plunge a wooden pole into the lake. Sure enough, the water was less than two metres in depth.

We soon drew opposite Xieshan (Shoe Hill), a small island connected in legend with Lin Xiaogu, also known as Xiaogu Niangniang. This girl from Fujian was betrothed when young to a local lad, Peng Liang, but her parents died and she was adopted by a Taoist immortal and taken to study Taoism on Mount Emei in Sichuan. One day, gathering herbs in the mountain, she slipped and fell, but was saved by a woodcutter who turned out to be none other than Peng Liang. In renewing her betrothal, Xiaogu broke her religious vows and was imprisoned by the immortal. However, with the aid of a sympathetic monk, she stole the immortal's magic umbrella and the lovers flew away. The pursuing immortal cut off their escape route at Lake Poyang with his flying sword, which tore the umbrella and made Xiaogu drop one of her embroidered slippers into the lake. The slipper was transformed into this shoe-shaped island!

Our boat moved on along the western bank into the territory of Xingzi County. Everyone swarmed to the starboard side on the upper deck, eager for glimpses of Mount Lushan. This was a favoured summer resort for the foreign trading community in the days when Jiujiang was a treaty port, from 1861 onwards. The town of Guling sheltered over one hundred summer bungalows. Chiang Kai-shek also had a summer villa there. The mountain is renowned for its strange rock shapes and sheer peaks, as well as its trees. Even in summer, the average temperature is only 23°C.

According to the captain, Lushan has an important bearing on the microclimate of the region. He said the mountain rising above the Poyang Plain on the west of the lake forms a sort of shield. The wind blowing over the lake is deflected back onto the surface of the water and makes the section of lake between the counties of Xingzi and Duchang particularly rough. Fishing boats and cargo ships often capsize in this 'mystery zone'.

We were in this area by now, but the lake was as calm and smooth as a mirror. Over a dozen tiny fishing boats were active on the waters. It was a peaceful scene with nothing brooding or menacing about it at all. Our captain called over some of the fishing boats so that we could buy some of their catch. A fellow passenger identified one big fish as a variegated carp, another with glistening scales as a mandarin fish, and one with a fairly long body as a silver carp.... Between us we picked out some twenty fish, each weighing about a kilo.

Fish in Abundance

Of the eleven counties and cities surrounding Lake Poyang, Duchang County has the best-developed fishing industry. It already boasted a large fishing fleet some one thousand years ago, when Tangyin, Zhouxi and Duchang were all fishing ports and several thousand households were engaged in the fishery industry. On the lake I saw that most of the fisherfolk still live on

Flower-strewn meadows (1) alternate with swamps, here at Ruihong (3), on the banks of the lake. Near Boyang, the water becomes an auditorium (2) as a performance of Jiangxi opera unfolds (4) (last two by Guo Jiasheng).

their boats. These are wooden boats with a rounded cover of woven reeds. Some of the larger craft have cabins big enough to be furnished with table, wardrobe, etc., and are decorated in bright colours.

November is the peak fishing season on the lake. Whole families turn out to help with the catch. As a folksong of Lake Poyang expresses it:

*In spring, yellow are a thousand hectares of rape;
In summer, fragrant are ten thousand mu of lotus flowers;
In autumn, golden rice crops glisten everywhere;
In winter, people in small boats are busy catching fish on the lake.*

Because the lake is so shallow, you can see the schools of fish swimming around below the surface. Some fishermen simply wade into the lake and catch smaller fish with their bare hands. Others throw nets from the shore, hauling in as many as a dozen fish in a single scoop. Catching fish on Lake Poyang is indeed child's play.

Our boat soon passed Xingzi and moved through a narrow part of the lake. The Laoye (Lord) Temple came into sight on the east bank. This temple, set behind a bare hill known as Xishan, is a little old edifice with walls painted red, eye-catching yet isolated, so that you can pick it out a long way off. Our boat pulled in to the shore, and we walked to the temple, passing many pilgrims.

There is a rather odd legend associated with this temple. Towards the end of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the whole country was in turmoil and there were many insurrections. Among the rebel leaders were Zhu Yuanzhang, who later became the founder and first emperor of the Ming dynasty, and Chen Youliang. Both of these men had large armies stationed in the areas south of the Yangtse. A fierce naval battle broke out between them at the northern end of Lake Poyang, some say in the vicinity of Mount Shizhong. As Zhu's fleet was losing, he started to retreat. Suddenly a great storm arose, which seemed likely to sink his warship. Then out of nowhere appeared a giant tortoise (or turtle) which, holding Zhu's ship in its mouth, steered it out of danger. When he came to power, Zhu conferred the title 'King Who Pacifies the Waters' on the tortoise and built this temple in its honour. Since then, the fisherfolk of Lake Poyang have looked on Laoye as their protector.

We walked up the steps leading to the central hall. On one wall I noted a hundred or so plaques bearing inscriptions such as 'Great is the kindness of our lord' — evidence of the gratitude of the fishermen. The decorations inside the temple are in the Ming-dynasty style with plain, elegant carvings in wood and stone. Canopies of red cloth hang all over the central hall, giving it an added touch of mystery.

It was after noon by the time we left the temple. The boat took us back to Xingzi. That night we stayed at Xiufeng Guesthouse at the foot of Mount Lushan, indulging in a delicious all-fish banquet.

Boyang's Opera

The following morning — a gorgeous day — we resumed our voyage towards Boyang County, south of Duchang on the lake's eastern bank. Boyang is about one hundred kilometres from Xingzi and it took us the best part of half a day to get there on the good boat *Lushan*. The greater part of this county lies in

A lakeside family (1); many of the fishermen use tame cormorants as fishing partners (3). Whitebait is becoming rarer and thus more prized (2).



1





2

3



the valley of the River Pojiang. In the Qin dynasty (221-207 B.C.) it was known as Fanxian, then Poyang in the Eastern Han (25-220). This name stuck until 1957 when it began to be called Boyang. It is known for its fish but what impresses many people most about it is its local opera troupe, claimed to be the best of its kind in Jiangxi Province.

As we approached the Boyang area, our captain started to hum a tune of the Raohe School (a branch of Jiangxi opera) in anticipation of our arrival. Jiangxi opera originated in the Shangrao district of northeastern Jiangxi, earning nationwide fame as far back as the Ming dynasty. It thus has a history of some five hundred years. In the countryside of northeastern Jiangxi and around Lake Poyang, the Raohe and Guangxin schools became most popular. But for the inhabitants of Boyang the Raohe School reigns supreme. 'Raohe' is actually the old name for the River Pojiang, so one can assume that this is the true indigenous form of opera.

We turned from the lake into the River Pojiang, passing between grassy marshlands where herds of cattle and water buffalo could be seen grazing. In this totally flat immensity, everything — boat, man, beast — seemed dwarfed.

Once we moored, we quickly left our luggage in a hotel in the small town. We were anxious to find out if we would have the chance to see Jiangxi opera while we were here. Many people attribute the excellent singing voices of Boyang's Jiangxi Opera Troupe to the quality of the water of Lake Poyang which is the local drinking water. This may be true. In the town, even the little children sing beautifully.

On the afternoon of the day after our arrival in Boyang, we succeeded in seeing local opera performed in a village not far from the county seat. The stage was a makeshift affair set up on a sandy beach, while the waist-deep lake water formed the auditorium. The moment the troupe beat their drums and gongs and fired a home-made musket as a sign that the performance was about to start, small boats came rowing from all directions like the surging tide. Some spectators simply waded through the shallows. In no time at all the 'theatre' was packed.

The troupe performed several of its best pieces. Jiangxi opera, in my opinion, is vivid and full of action. The performance went on until nightfall.

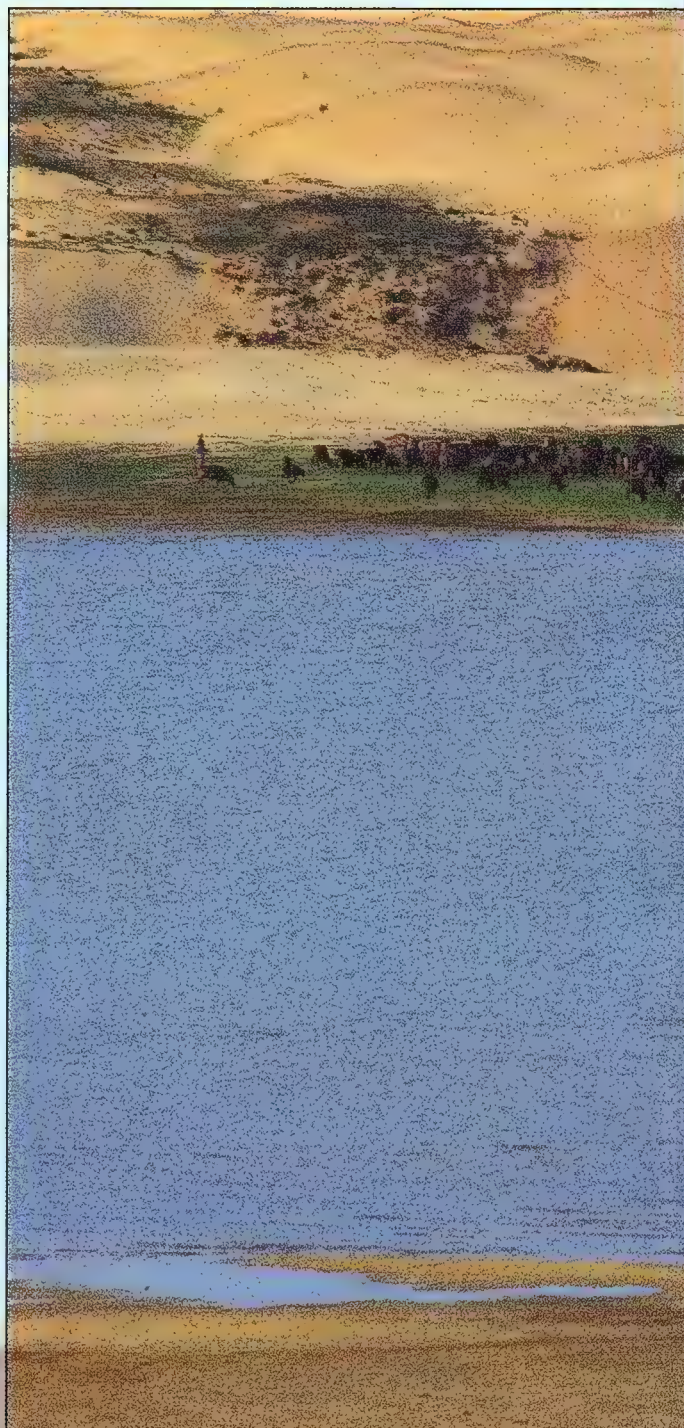
Whitebait and Ox-Carts

By now half of our tour of the lake was complete. Our next stop was Yugan County at the southern tip of the lake, where we were to visit the small town of Ruihong.

Our boat sounded her siren twice as we re-entered Lake Poyang, rounding the Kangshan Embankment before entering an area of marshes criss-crossed by little streams. The greens and blues of the landscape were so entangled here that it looked like an abstract carpet design. As we went further south, the green started to predominate.

After passing Kangshan and Meixi, we soon reached Ruihong. The calm waters of the River Xinjiang and Lake Poyang lie on three sides of the township which has an area of less than five square kilometres. Ruihong was a prosperous harbour as far back as the Ming dynasty. As we were berthing at the quayside, I counted over a hundred fishing boats, big and small, drawn up there. Smoke rose from the kitchen stoves on the boats, on some of which perched a number of the tame cormorants used for fishing.

The ox-carts have gigantic wooden wheels (1) in Wucheng, where drinking water still has to be drawn from wells such as this (2). The sand-dunes near Wucheng are rather reminiscent of northwestern China (3).





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We followed our enterprising captain into the main street, which was crowded with people. Two-storeyed shops lined the street. They must have been at least a hundred years old; the paint on their signboards had flaked off, exposing the grain of the wood.

The captain told us that the market at Ruihong had a long history, and was famed far beyond the borders of the province. Fishermen and farmers come to the market every day but special fairs are held every three or four days, when between twenty and thirty thousand people from Jinxian, Nanchang and Boyang come to buy and sell. Transactions amount to several hundred thousand yuan per day.

Around noon, exhausted by our sightseeing, we went into a small restaurant on the main street for some lunch. The captain, who was still with us, recommended a local delicacy — whitebait. This is known among Jiangxi people as 'the best of all seafood' and, in the past, was a staple of the local diet. However, catches of whitebait have fallen off drastically in recent years as a result of land reclamation and over-fishing, so it is now much more expensive and has attained the status of a luxury food.

After the meal, we returned to the *Lushan*. We wanted to reach our final destination — Wucheng in Yongxiu County, almost opposite Duchang — before dark. The captain redoubled our speed, scaring wild ducks and geese resting in the swamps which flew up with a great commotion.

Little Lü pointed out some ox-drawn carts as we passed through the swamps. The carts had large wooden wheels. When the lake subsides in the autumn and winter, it exposes a grassy tract some hundred kilometres long. The local people collect reeds there for fuel as well as grass for fodder. These

(Continued on page 89)



A crane, symbol of longevity, adorns a stele near Wanghu Pavilion (1), and a timeless street scene in the ancient township of Wucheng (2) (both by Tai Chi Yin).





Winter Quarters of the White Crane



PHOTOS BY LI XINHUA

ARTICLE BY TIAN WEN

Late one autumn several years ago, I was on a visit to the swamps of the Zhalong Nature Reserve near Qiqihar in north-eastern China's Heilongjiang Province when I was lucky enough to sight a small flock of cranes. After a few minutes, they spread their wings and soared high into the sky. I was told that they would be heading south to Jiangxi and Lake Poyang, south of the River Yangtse, as they could sense the approach of winter.

In view of this episode, which has always stuck in my mind, I was even happier to have the chance to go to Lake Poyang. It was my hope that I would be able to see cranes and other migratory birds at the other end of their flight path.

The Lake Poyang Migratory Birds Conservation Zone is located in Yongxiu County on the western side of the lake where it is joined by the rivers Xiushui and Ganjiang. Its 22,400 hectares of marshes, shallows and ponds abound in fish, shrimps, shellfish, snails and weeds which serve as ready stocks of food for birds. At the same time, the mountains to the west provide the migrants with a shield against the cold winds. About 100,000 white cranes, black storks, pelicans, bustards and other birds of over a hundred species make their way here from Qinghai and Heilongjiang — even from Siberia in the Soviet Union — for the winter. They stay until March, the beginning of spring, when they return north to nest and raise their young.

My visit took place in early December, the season when migrants make their way south. The old town of Wucheng, site of the headquarters of the Migratory Birds Conservation Zone, makes a good base. It even has a lookout tower for watching birds. I climbed to the top and was soon feasting my eyes on a remarkable sight. Wucheng is surrounded by the waters of the two rivers, with the lake only a short distance away. The flat landscape was dotted with wild ducks and geese as far as I could see.

The following day I joined a group led by a guide. We first boarded a small launch. Our destination was Zhonghuchi (Medium Lake). The conservation zone also includes Dahuchi (Large Lake), and many other smaller lakes and ponds.

After we had pattered along for half an hour or so, the boat was forced to stop because of the low water (in winter, the volume of water in the lake and its tributaries falls dramatically). We had to clamber out and wade to our destination, not a pleasant task with all



Pelicans (1) are winter visitors to the lake, while yellow-nib ducks (2) are permanent residents.

our photographic paraphernalia festooned around us. After trudging laboriously for more than an hour, some of the disgruntled group gave up and turned back. But I, with the remainder, persisted and eventually reached the lake.

'Medium Lake'? At first sight, I thought from its colour that it would be more appropriate to call it White Lake. It was covered with swans in such quantities that you could hardly see any water. In the sunlight their collective plumage shone like a mirror. This magnificent sight alone was worth all the effort to reach the lake.

Just as I was thinking of moving closer, the guide stopped me. He told me that the birds get alarmed and fly away as soon as they sense somebody approaching within two hundred metres. I was a little sceptical about his advice and took a few gentle steps forward. At once, the swans closest to me flew up and moved to the rear of the group, although those further back seemed unconcerned since I was still a safe distance from them. I marvelled at their powers of perception and had to be content to watch them from beyond this invisible 'barrier'.

Suddenly, I heard a bird cry out. It was a spotted-billed pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*), one of the largest species in the conservation zone. Weighing in at about ten kilos, it can swallow a one-kilo fish at a single gulp. Its food is stored in the large purple pouch under its beak.

Zhonghuchi offers a winter refuge for many species of wildfowl. On the other side of the lake, where the water was shallower, I spotted mallards, yellow-nib ducks, pintails, Baikal teals and ruddy shelducks. Not all of them are migrants from the north. The yellow-nib ducks (*Anas poecilorhyncha*), for example, which rather resemble mandarin ducks, are 'natives' of Poyang. Though small in size, they have a voracious appetite, and the local farmers regard them as a pest.

The following day, our intention was to go to see the white cranes at Shahuchi (Sandy Lake). Somewhat to our surprise, our guide rented an ox-cart from a farmer as soon as we were near our destination. He explained that white cranes, like swans, are sensitive to the approach of human beings. However, they did not mind the ox-carts which drove up and down collecting reeds and grass. 'So, if you want a clear view of the cranes,' he finished, 'the best way is to conceal yourselves in an ox-cart!'



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Indeed, just as he had said, we found it easy to get within fifty metres of the cranes. These were white cranes — also known as Siberian cranes (*Grus leucogeranus*). Their snow-white plumage, pink bills and long, long legs gave them something of the appearance of ballet dancers garbed in white tutus. Some of them were in groups of three, others stood alone. Apparently, each threesome was a family: two parent birds and their single offspring. I noticed brown feathers in among the white plumes of the juveniles. The brown would disappear gradually as the young birds matured.

When the cranes pranced around, they again reminded me of ballet dancers, such was their grace of movement. I could not resist taking a picture of the lone crane standing nearest to me. Even though I was as quiet as possible and moved slowly, the crane immediately hopped into the air, its feet lightly bobbing against the

water surface several times before, spreading its wings, it rose into the sky. The rest followed suit. For a moment, the surface of the lake seemed to explode, water spattering everywhere.

In addition to the white cranes, a total of 5,000 hooded cranes (*Grus monacha*), white-naped cranes (*Grus vipio*) and common cranes (*Grus grus*) winter in the area. All of these are rare and endangered species.

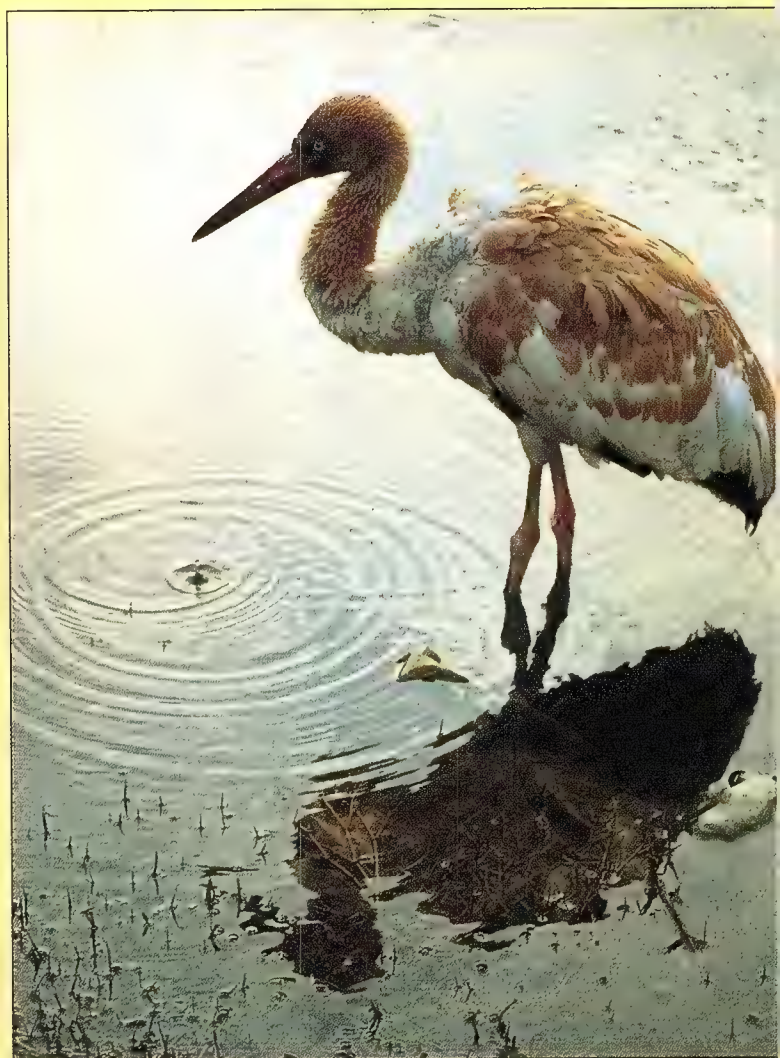
Like the white cranes, the white-naped cranes gather in flocks after sunset, uttering loud cries which can be heard for several kilometres around for about thirty minutes. The evening chorus dies down as they settle for sleep.

In the shallows and the open marshlands, it is impossible to approach the birds, even using the ox-cart ruse. In order to get close, some enthusiastic bird-watchers stop at nothing to attain their goal. They hire local people to make hides for them. In this case, the hide is a hole in the dried-up river bed, man-high and wide enough to take two people. Straw is spread over the opening as camouflage, leaving just an aperture for a camera lens to poke through. The enthusiasts climb into their hide at around two o'clock in the morning, well before dawn, and wait for the cranes to appear. This method has resulted in some very successful photos but is, of course, horribly uncomfortable. The indignities people suffer for their hobbies! But then, bird-watching is more a passion than a mere hobby....



Translated by Anne Yan

The white cranes fly off if humans come too close (1), but the local ox-carts provide a useful camouflage (2, by Tai Chi Yin). Hooded cranes are among the rare species seen here (3); the mottled plumage of a juvenile crane (4).



4



Wuyuan — A Retreat fr

Wuyuan lies one hundred kilometres to the east of Jingdezhen. The county is only accessible by road, only a few sections of which are asphalted; the rest is poorly maintained, bumpy and muddy. The road, rough though it was, had been built only a few years before. As the car jolted along, the driver reminded us that we were now deep in the mountains of northeastern Jiangxi, where transportation facilities are generally poor.

Wuyuan was part of Huizhou Prefecture in ancient China, but never a communications hub, a trading centre, or a strategic point in military terms. Though Wuyuan County was established as early as 740 in the Tang dynasty, it is visited rarely by outsiders. It has something of the aura of a hermit's hideaway, forgotten by the rest of the world and uninterested in its preoccupations.

It was November. Yellow leaves the size of my palm had been falling from the plane trees in Nanchang. This hilly region around Wuyuan was shrouded in mist. There was a sadness, a melancholy, in the filtered morning light.

Having travelled through the mountains for two hours, we arrived in the county seat Ziyang (marked Wuyuan on the map) — a thousand-year-old town. Surrounded by water on three sides, it juts out from the mountainside like a sort of peninsula. There is a forest park on the mountain and a tea garden of over 600 hectares just outside the county town. Wuyuan's green tea is famous.

Shelter in Time of Danger

The scenic spots of Wuyuan are scattered along three routes to the east, north and west of the county town.

We left Ziyang by car the following morning and took a small track around the mountain towards the east. This eastern route is most picturesque. As our car wound through the mountains, green landscapes greeted us as we passed between the cliffs and the forests. Most of the terraced fields so common in southern China were bare, and autumnal yellows and oranges prevailed. Some fields, however, were dark green: these were the



om the World

PHOTOS BY TAI CHI YIN
ARTICLE BY ER DONGQIANG



tea plantations. Houses with whitewashed walls and grey or black roofs were dotted in among the fields.

Before we set out, Mr. Zhan, the director of the Wuyuan Museum in Ziyang, had told us: 'Literati and officials of the past chose Wuyuan as a place to shelter from war or as a place where they could retire to meditate and cultivate their mind. Among these green trees and mountains, they could live in seclusion and peace.'

We reached Qingyuan, the remotest place in Wuyuan County. Standing at the top of a valley, we saw rocks and pines under which cattle were grazing, with a stream murmuring by. It was about fifty metres to the village set in a second valley.

A temple stood on the arched stone bridge at the village entrance. The houses were built on both sides of the stream, typical of the waterside villages of the region south of the Yangtse, particularly Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. It was all very peaceful and I could understand its appeal to those seeking a tranquil life.

Xiaoqi — Home of Celebrities

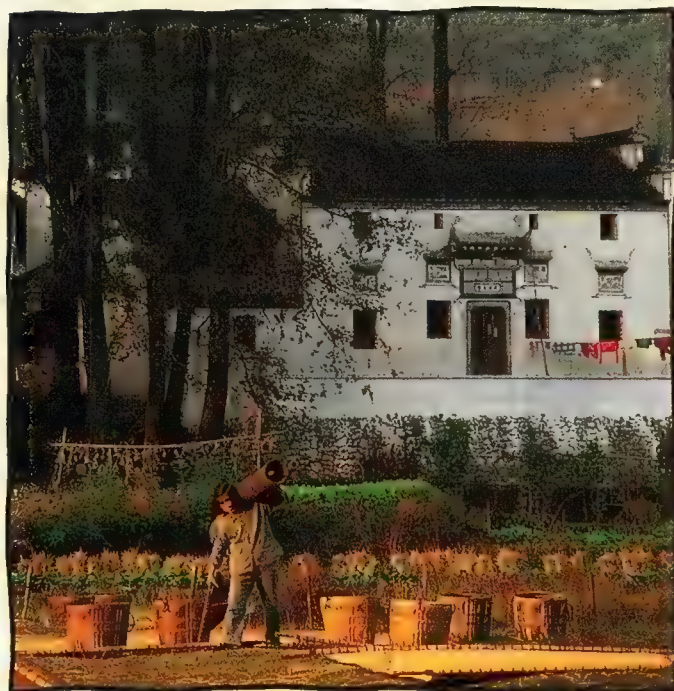
We left Qingyuan and headed by car towards Xiaoqi in the township of Jiangwan. This village nestling in a valley is actually twin villages, the two lying about one kilometre apart by the side of the Duanxin Brook.

Wuyuan County is full of water. Whenever you visit a village, you have to cross a dark-green river, which sometimes even surrounds the village. Bridges tend to be long, narrow contraptions made of rough planks, even tree-trunks — nerve-wracking things for an outsider to cross.

As we were entering Xiaoqi we heard the sound of young voices. Led by the pleasant chant, we came to a primary school where a dozen pupils were reading aloud from textbooks. Their few desks and chairs were set in a rather large room which was illuminated by light from the windows and by narrow skylights in the roof.

The so-called Scholar's House at Jingdezhen (1) once stood in Wuyuan, a county of terraced hillsides and picturesque villages (2).





1



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The villagers of Wuyuan County, no matter how poor they may be, are eager to send their children to school. This respect for learning has historical reasons. Many famous people have sprung from these humble surroundings. Zhu Xi (1130-1200), a literary critic of the Southern Song dynasty and famous philosopher of the Confucian school, for example. In more recent times, Zhan Tianyou (1861-1919), the railway engineer in charge of construction of the Beijing-Zhangjiakou (now Beijing-Baotou) railway line, was a native of Wuyuan.

A total of 1,275 books were written by Wuyuan people between the Song and Qing dynasties. Of these, 175 books were included in the *Si Ku Quan Shu* (*Complete Library of the Four Treasures*), a stupendous compilation started in 1772 and completed a decade later. Wuyuan earned itself the nickname 'village home of literacy'. This reputation was enhanced when some scholars and officials returned to live in retirement in their home areas and had a great influence on the ordinary people.

On a path close to Xiaoqi we came across a painter from Shanghai who was painting a village scene on a square canvas. Sitting on a stool, he told me that he had carried his heavy gear all the way, but found Xiaoqi well worth the trouble. Our driver interrupted to say that the village of Likeng not far away was no less picturesque.

He took us there without further ado. Having left the car at the village entrance, we ventured in. A small yellow dog barked at us a few times, the only sound to break the silence. Two girls peeped out shyly from a building decorated with carved designs.

Likeng is a really small village cut in two by a narrow brook. Its houses have whitewashed walls, black rooftiles and high fire gables in typical Anhui style. Wooden single-log bridges, set twenty or so metres apart, span the brook, and the houses look at each other over the water in neighbourly fashion.

That night we put up at the village headman's house. After supper I took a walk in the moonlight. 'Early to bed and early to rise' be-



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*Despite their rural life (1 and 2), the local people value education (3, by Er Dongqiang).
Streams and brooks flow everywhere, necessitating the many bridges (4 and 5).*





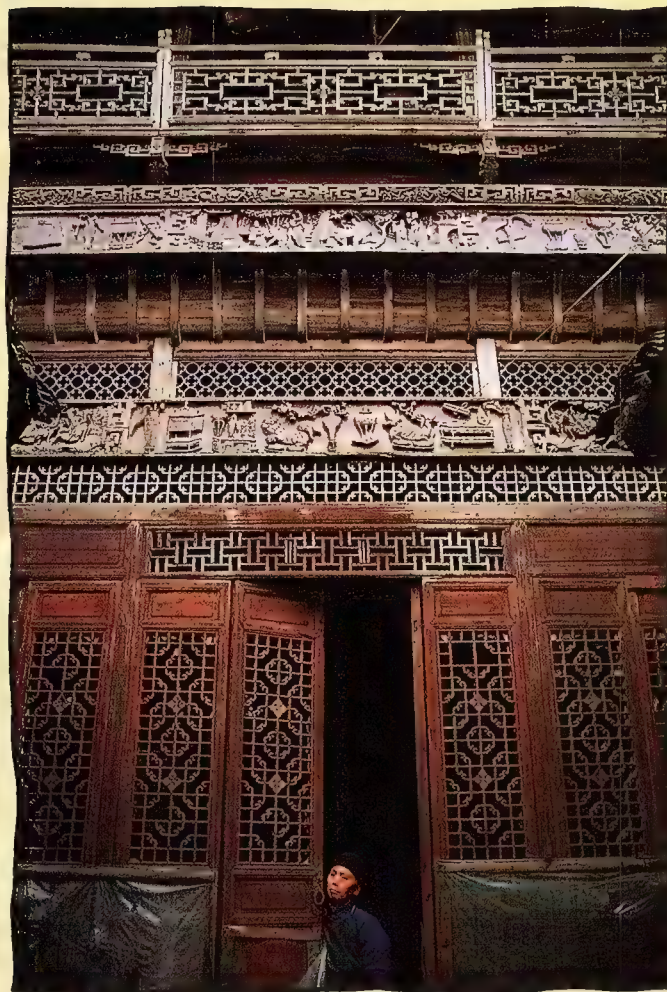
1

Reflections in a weir-pond (1, by Li Qing). The villagers live in houses of extraordinary finesse, with exquisite woodcarvings and latticework (2 and 3). The small room was built out over the pond purely for the pleasure of watching the goldfish (4). The two-storeyed main hall at Yancun is lit naturally via an octagonal skylight (5, by Er Dongqiang).





2



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ing the motto by which the villagers live, I saw few passers-by in the flagstoned street, even at seven in the evening. Dim light shone in the windows of the tall houses.

Exquisite Village Architecture

Earlier, in Jingdezhen, we had visited an ancient building which was most beautifully decorated with brick and wood carvings. We were told that the building had originally stood in Wuyuan County, but had been reassembled on its present site. Now we decided to take the northern route from the county town to see more of these wonderful old buildings.

The village of Likeng (another one!) in the township of Tuochuan in northern Wuyuan is famous for the fact that several people from here succeeded in passing the imperial examinations and were rewarded with high official positions. The village boasted no less than nine *jinshi* (the title given to those who passed the highest grade of imperial examinations) and four *shangshu* (ministers).

We saw many well-preserved residences in Likeng. They included ministers' mansions, adjutants' homes, even chamberlains' homes. Most of them date from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and were constructed by officials on their retirement. In the vicinity of the village we also saw a building complex said to have been a treasury or quarters for a high official's retinue.

Among the places we visited was a *shangshudi*, a minister's mansion, now the home of ordinary villagers. The inside was richly ornamented, with latticework and bas-relief carvings on panels, doors, beams and rafters. The furniture, however, was simple. In the back courtyard there was a deep, round fishpond five metres in diameter, in which goldfish were swimming around happily. In one corner above the pond, a small wooden belvedere had been built out especially so that the house occupants could watch the goldfish.

Sixty Homes in One Complex

These officials' homes were superbly made, but rather too pretentious for my taste. In the early Ming dynasty, while a certain family surnamed Yu grew prosperous in Tuochuan, quite a few of them



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acceding to high office, another, the Jin family, declined in fortune and moved to Yancun, now a village in the township of Sikou, south of Tuochuan. The members of this family followed the principle of studying hard in the hopes of obtaining an official post or, failing that, becoming merchants. Many left home to engage in the tea and lumber trades. Some of them made their fortune and were able to embellish and extend the family home in Yancun to bring honour to their ancestors, producing an astonishing architectural complex with a more rural ambience.

It was noon and drizzling when we arrived. But there was no need for an umbrella! All the dwellings in Yancun are linked together so that we could walk from one end to the other of the village without



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2

getting wet. Still, it was difficult to find your way around. We were guided through the labyrinth by a local person.

The first place we came to after passing through the main entrance was of typical Jiangxi architectural style. This was the main hall, where family members would congregate. All the beams were carved with designs of legendary figures from operas or folktales. An octagonal aperture allowed light and air to penetrate into the hall below. The doors of the side chambers (generally reserved for the elderly of the family) off the central hall were exquisitely decorated with poems or carvings on traditional themes.

Ancestral shrines are dotted in among the sixty or so houses which make up the village, all dating from the Qing dynasty. The floors are paved with flagstones, shiny through long use, and the windows of the houses are tiny to deter robbers and bandits.

'Respect the Written Word'

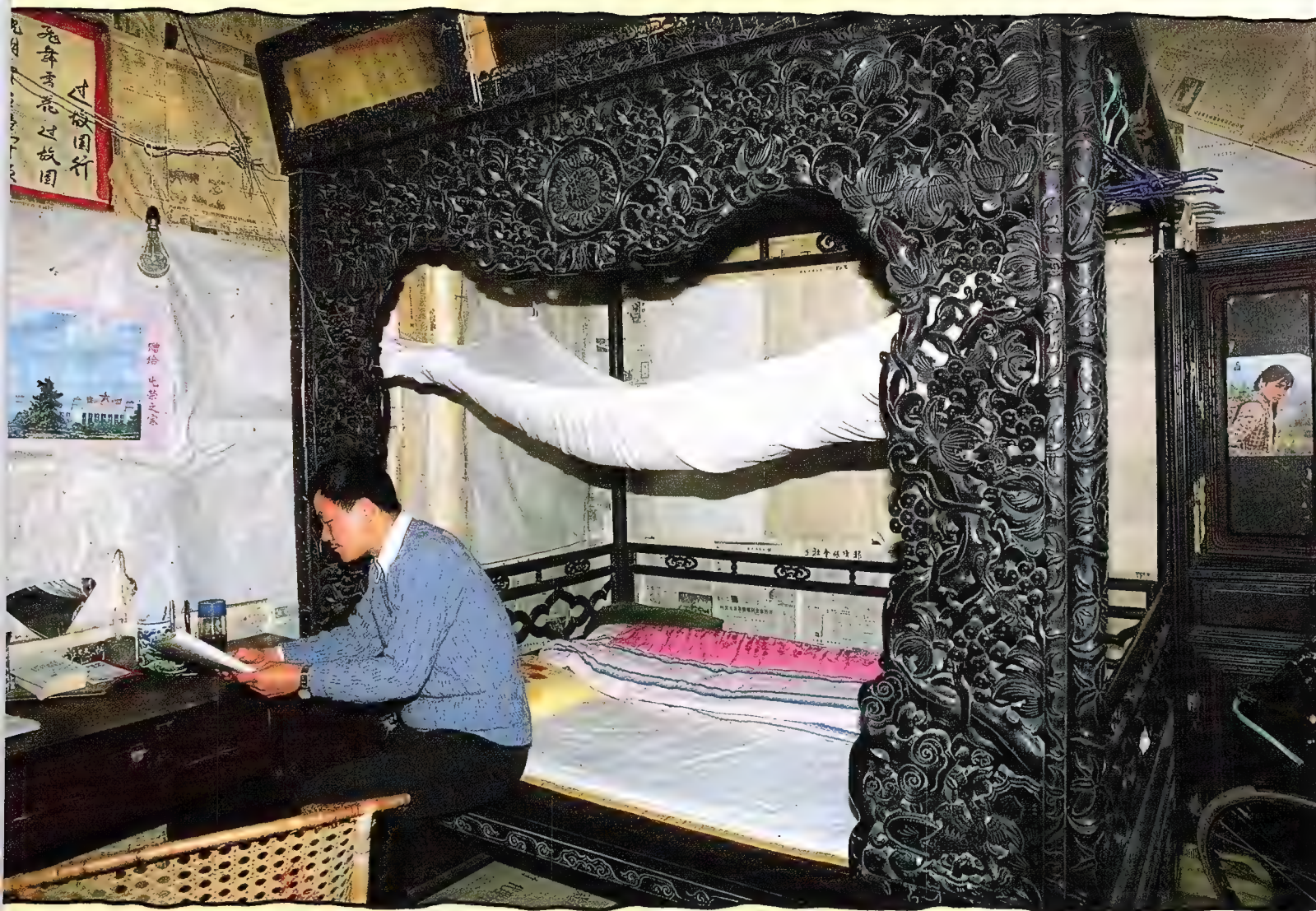
Our driver told us that there was one more village we really must not miss, only five hundred metres away. We walked there through the fields.

The houses at Sixi are all black and white. The well-known Jingxutang Mansion in this village is the best-preserved example of Qing-dynasty architecture in the whole of Wuyuan County. There are six interior courtyards, in one of which there is a brick niche in the wall, shaped somewhat like a gourd (or a keyhole). Above this is inscribed: 'Respect and treasure the written word'. It was believed that the Chinese script had been invented by the immortals and should be treasured. Any piece of paper with writing on it had to be burned in this wall niche.

The main hall contains intricate carvings, as do the balustrades on the upper storey, and they are all in a good state of preservation.

It was getting dark by the time we left the mansion to return to Ziyang. Thinking back over the architectural gems we had seen in Wuyuan County during the past two days, it seemed completely understandable that one might want to retire to the depths of this county. It certainly appears to be a place in which you could happily forget the rest of the world and all its troubles.

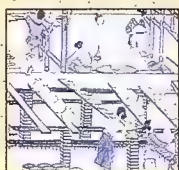
Translated by He Fei



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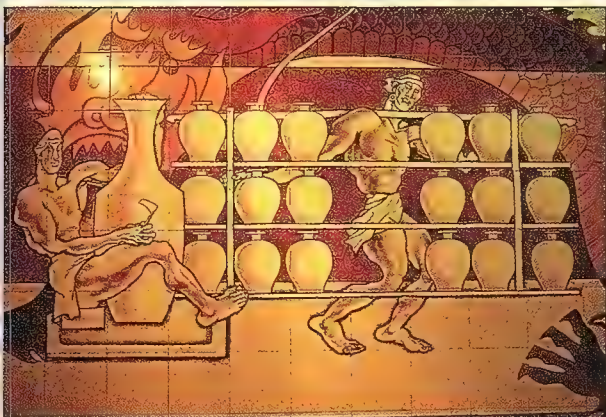
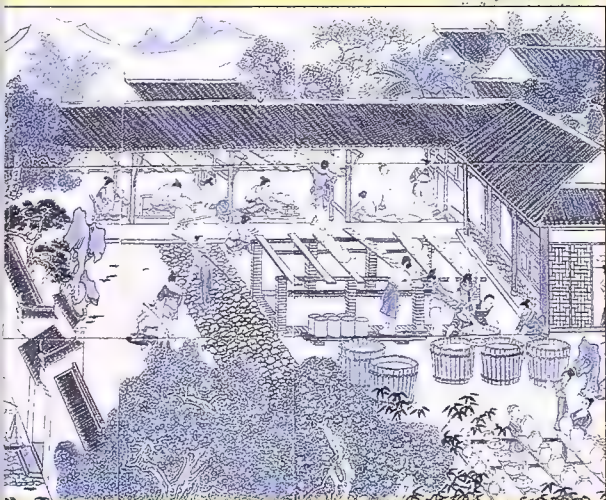
In these old houses, even the kitchen drains are decorative (1); the niche for burning paper at Sixi (3). Relief carvings on the walls mostly depict opera stories or legends (2, by Liu Jianguan). Such a bed of nanmu wood – well-made and solid – is now a rarity (4).





Glimpses of Jingdezhen's Past

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY LIU JIANGYUAN



The history of ceramics in China goes back several thousand years. The potter's wheel was in use in eastern China at least by the time of the black wares of the Longshan Culture. Of the many places in China renowned for the skill of their potters over the centuries, one of the most eminent was Jingdezhen in Jiangxi.

According to the *Annals of Fuliang County*, Jingdezhen was originally called Changnan. During the Jingde period (1004-1007) of the Song dynasty, Emperor Zhenzong was so keen on the porcelain produced here that he ordered all the pieces made for him to be marked 'Produced during the Jingde reign'. Changnan was accordingly renamed Jingdezhen (Town of Jingde), and an official porcelain repository was established in the area.

Although the kilns at Jingdezhen were certainly producing pottery by the Tang dynasty (618-907) and probably much earlier, despite the absence of finds to date, true porcelain was not developed until the Song dynasty. Porcelain is characterized by its hardness, its fine-grained texture, non-porous and translucent, and by the fact that its ingredients can be fired at between 1,150 and 1,350°C.

One of the famous products was *yingqing* (misty blue) porcelain. As early as the Northern Song (960-1127), this was popular thanks to its fine texture and lustrous sheen. Excavations of Yuan-dynasty imperial sites in Beijing have uncovered large quantities of *yingqing* porcelain, which has also been found in Southeast Asian digs.

The Hutian kiln was one of the major producers of this ware. The ruins of the kiln can be seen in the village of the same name five kilometres southeast of Jingdezhen, beside the Nanhe, a tributary of the Changjiang — the river which flows through Jingdezhen — and are now under state protection. It was active from the Five Dynasties (907-960) until the Ming dynasty, a period of nearly seven hundred years.

Of particular interest to the visitor are the two remaining sites at Jingdezhen which still use traditional manual methods and wood-fired kilns. One is the Jianguo Porcelain Factory, the other the Ancient Porcelain Factory, established in 1980 and located in the Ancient Ceramic and Porcelain Exhibition Area.

3

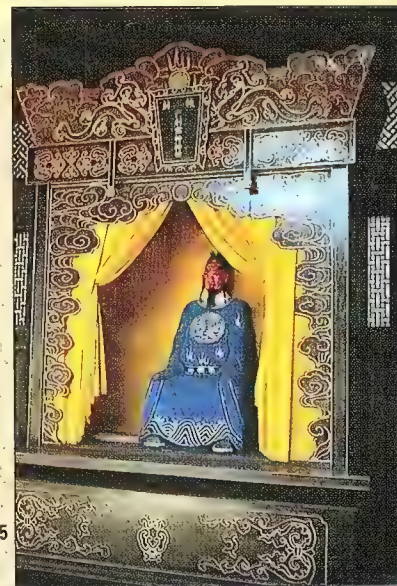


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A glazed tile mural depicts a Ming-dynasty pottery workshop (1, by Wu Jiangnan and Xu Jinghui) while another at the Jingdezhen Hotel shows kiln workers of old (2). The Ancient Porcelain Factory occupies buildings in Ming and Qing style (4) where clay is worked in the traditional manner (3). God of Kilns and Earth at Jingdezhen's Ceramics Museum (5) (2, 4 and 5 by Tai Chi Yin).

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Drying ceramic articles, including horse figurines (1), are stacked everywhere inside the old workshops (2, by Tai Chi Yin), including on wooden racks specially designed for these narrow spaces (4). The ingredients for pigments have always been closely guarded secrets (3). Blue pigment is painted directly on to the unglazed wares (6), while stacked pots await their turn in the kiln (5).

Traditional Potter's Workshop

The latter is to be found at Mount Panlong seven kilometres from the city centre, and consists of the Ancient Porcelain Factory, the Ceramics Museum, and sundry buildings dating from the Ming and Qing dynasties. The buildings and the factory are genuine relics, but they have been moved here from their original site and rebuilt.

Heaps of china clay are piled along the path at the entrance to the factory. One of the workshops is set in an old whitewashed house with black roof tiles. Inside, planks stacked with unfinished plates, bowls and dishes play at cat's cradle with the structural beams. The winding corridors also house drying frames, a clay-preparing workshop and sundry other studios.

You can watch workers preparing clay by treading it underfoot, while others knead clay on boards. This is important for the quality of the finished wares, since it serves to dispel air bubbles and even out the moisture levels in the clay. The well-mixed clay is then passed to the potter's wheel, which is rotated by means of a wooden stick. Each shaped piece is neatly stacked on the huge drying frame, which is removed to the kiln when full — a tricky process! One is reminded of an assembly line since there is a clear division of labour. In the Ming dynasty, the scholar Song Yingxing reckoned that there were 72 processes involved in producing each piece of porcelain.

This factory now produces mainly blue-and-white ware. This was an innovation of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), helped by the development of trade with the Middle East at that time. Unlike the generally monochrome ceramics produced in the Song dynasty, the potters applied the cobalt blue pigment directly to the body of the vessel before the transparent glaze was applied. The vessel was then fired at 1,200°C. Zheng He (1371-1433), the famous eunuch admiral of the Ming, is said to have taken a great amount of blue-and-white porcelain with him for use as gifts to those he met along his way during his seven voyages to the 'Western Seas' which took him throughout Southeast Asia and as far as the eastern coast of Africa.

This factory also makes the so-called eggshell porcelain. Records say that the 'egg membrane cups' made by Wu Shijiu in the Wanli reign (1573-1619) of the Ming dynasty were as thin as cicada wings, so that the lines and whorls on one's fingers could be seen through them in the light. Today, the eggshell porcelain produced is less than 0.5 millimetre thick. As an ancient verse describes it:

*Fearful it would be blown away by the wind,
Worried lest it melt in the heat of the sun....*

The objects made include bowls, plates, cups and dishes, vases, desk and wine sets, and exquisite shadow lanterns. Although precision of temperature is all-important for the firing of such delicate and fragile porcelain, strange to relate there is not a single thermometer in the Ancient Porcelain Factory. It is said that an experienced worker can tell whether the kiln has reached the correct temperature by spitting at the kiln wall!

Jihong (Sacrificial Red)

Whereas the Ancient Porcelain Factory produces mainly blue-and-white wares, the Jiangguo Porcelain Factory turns out polychrome enamelled porcelain. It too uses a wood-fired kiln. Today's coal-fired and electric kilns just do not produce the same effect.

Polychrome porcelain is difficult to make. Even if the ingredients are the same, any slightest change in the thickness of the glaze, positioning in the kiln or firing temperature can make a great difference to the final product. Such time-consuming and demanding work was generally only done for the imperial court and the nobility. *Guanyao*, porcelain wares from the official kilns, were strictly for court use and subject to supervision by imperial officials. All products from



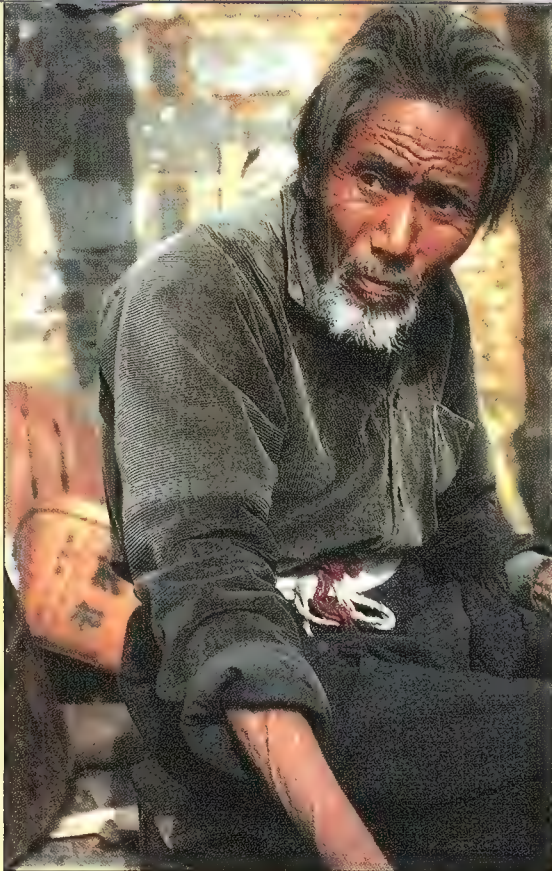
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these kilns which failed to meet the quality required had to be destroyed, so that surviving pieces from the Ming and Qing dynasties are now rare and priceless antiques.

The ingredients used in mixing the pigments for polychrome porcelain included coral, agate, jade, pearl, even gold. Perfection was all; the cost and time taken to produce a perfect piece was immaterial. Shards and broken pots have been dumped into the River Changjiang for centuries, with the result that the riverbed is a treasure trove for art historians and seekers of antique porcelain shards.

It was customary at Jingdezhen for techniques to be passed on only in the male line, the reason being that a daughter would eventually marry into another family and might betray any secrets she had taken with her. Even now, potters are male and women are not allowed to enter the kiln. There is a superstitious belief that if a woman goes into it, the kiln might collapse, which would of course be disastrous. Indeed, there were historical cases of kiln-owners committing suicide because of bankruptcy brought on by the collapse of their kiln.

Yet one of the famous red glazes of Jingdezhen developed in the Ming dynasty was *jihong* (sacrificial red), which comes complete with legend. Long, long ago there lived a potter who had a beautiful daughter. It so happened that the emperor of the time demanded polychrome wares of great beauty. The local officials urged the old porcelain-maker to greater artistic heights, but he was unable to satisfy their requirements and was thrown in prison. To save her father's skin, the daughter used her own blood to make a glaze (yes, how did she know all these secrets?) and produced a pot of extraordinarily fine hue which so pleased the emperor that he had her father released. The daughter, however, having fulfilled her filial duty, died from loss of blood. Thus the legend!

The Original China Clay

There are many reasons why Jingdezhen developed such a reputation, but initially it must have been its natural advantages and resources which prompted the building of the kilns.

One advantage was its geographical location. Products could be transported along the River Changjiang to Lake Poyang, north across the lake to Jiujiang, and thence east along the River Yangtse to the ports of the south and east coast. Another advantage was the large areas of pinewoods in the region, providing the materials for fuelling the kilns.

But there was more: a hill called Gaoling, sixty kilometres northeast of Jingdezhen. The clay there is the reason for Jingdezhen's fame; indeed, the reason for the development of true porcelain. The infusible white mineral clay can be fired at very high temperatures, producing the vitreous, thin-walled articles which were unique to China for long centuries. Gaoling has given its name to kaolin, also known as china clay. You can climb the hill, where many families have lived from generation to generation extracting the clay, although the deposits are more or less exhausted now. There are still many old quarries and pits there, as well as piles of white waste sand. The kaolin was shipped along the Donghe, yet another tributary of the Changjiang, to Jingdezhen. The giant stone slabs of the old wharf bear witness to this past industry.

Even today, Jingdezhen is dotted with hundreds of chimneys. It does not need much imagination to conjure up a picture of how it must have looked when you hear a Ming-dynasty description of the city in its heyday: 'White smoke covered the sky by day and flames rose into the air at night.'

Translated by Gu Weizhou



Many of the elderly villagers of Gaoling are bowed and bent (1) from long years of mining kaolin in pits such as this (2). The waters of the Changjiang run white with clay effluent (4) and piles of shards tell of past failures (3). Readily available split pine logs fuel the traditional kilns (5).



4



5



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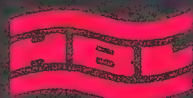
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Masks to Repel Evil

PHOTOS BY ER DONGQIANG TEXT BY DAI DINGJIU

Some areas of southwestern China have a custom of hanging over the lintel of a house a ferocious mask, often with protruding eyeballs and tongue. In Sichuan, Yunnan and Guizhou this type of mask is called *tunkou* ('devouring mouth'). The name comes from the belief that it will devour all demons, monsters and evil spirits and prevent them from molesting the people of the household.

Generally different in concept from the masks used as props by actors in *nuo* masked drama (see CHINA TOURISM no. 104), these masks play something of the same role as the door gods of central China. In fact, some *tunkou* masks do rather resemble the ugly, fierce faces of the Tang-dynasty generals Qin Shubao and Yuchi Jingde, who are painted or pasted as paper images on the house door as door gods to avert evil. However, use of *tunkou* masks predates door gods by several hundred years.

The masks shown below are all from Guizhou Province. Generally speaking, Guizhou's *tunkou* can be divided into three kinds — humans, deities and beasts. The latter category is the most common, although beast masks frequently incorporate features of the first two categories.

Carved from white poplar or willow, the masks are painted with either a thick or thin coat of paint. The thick coat involves application of bold colours such as red, blue and green, which are then varnished. The other type involves painting the surface of the mask with a thin layer of reddish-brown or yellow ochre as base, then applying an even layer of tung oil before adding the details in black or some other dark colour.

Whatever the painting technique employed, Guizhou's *tunkou* masks give the impression of overweening power. They are simple, even crude in some cases, yet often display a sort of ferocious beauty.

The carving technique is characterized by the method of using the burin, the simplicity of line, and the clear contours. Every mask is a piece of art.

Black forms the background, while rich reds and yellows are used for a particularly intricate effect. The pointed ears seem to be both ears and horns. Although the teeth are not as convincingly fierce as some of the examples shown below, the dagger clenched between the teeth more than makes up for this since it appears to be stained with the blood of the last demon which attempted to invade the household. This detail, the protuberant tongue and the bulging eyes add to the overwhelming effect of this impressive *tunkou*.





This *tunkou* is more amiable than most. Though it has pointed ears and a central horn, it also — unusually — has a smile on its rectangular face, evident in the upturned lips and the laughter lines on the high cheeks. Executed in the 'warm' colours red and yellow, it looks too friendly to frighten off demons.

This mask appears to utilize aspects of the facial make-up used in Beijing Opera. The upper part of the face has a marked decorative character, seen in the pair of red horns, the square 'hat' and a second pair of vestigial horns budding on its forehead. But the most noticeable feature is its teeth — the four cruel, interlocking incisors are terrifying to behold. The lime, red and black colours used for this *tunkou* give it extra boldness of expression.



The mask has more of the human about it. The eyes are hollowed out in genuine mask form, unlike most of the other examples. Its large, savage mouth is however obviously that of a beast of prey — a lion or tiger. This adds to its ferocity. The use of unvarnished natural wood produces the texture of human skin in a way which the painted masks cannot emulate.

This one resembles a leopard or tiger mask, but the colours are fanciful. Dark blue is used for the background, red, green and white for the details. The protuberant eyes are surrounded by a fire-like red halo, and the red eyebrows look like flames. The characters on the long tongue spell out a name: 'Shi Gandang from Mount Taishan'. Shi Gandang was a legendary hero living on Shandong's Mount Taishan who was said to be able to subdue evil.



The shape of this mask, half-man, half-tiger, seems to owe something to the traditional wooden ladle of the area, which often appears in arts and crafts but is also used as a talisman (see Things Chinese in CHINA TOURISM no. 105). Although the dagger is still in the sheath, the clenched fangs which hold it reveal menace. The wood has been left plain, which adds to the effect. This again is a true mask, with holes for the eyes. The carver has cleverly utilized the two symmetric whorls in the natural grain of the wood to form the cheeks.



Another example of the half-man, half-beast type of *tynkou*. The eyeballs bug out from their sunken sockets. The pattern on the lower jaw radiates downwards like fangs, and there are marked lines on the face. This mask employs three strong primary colours — yellow, red and blue, and the whole thing reminds one of the complex facial tattoos of ancient peoples. ☐

Translated by Chen Jiaji

Mountain Ceremony of the Tibetans of Southern Gansu

PHOTOS & TEXT BY ZHENG MING

Bearing poles fitted with prayer-flags, the tribesmen ride up the mountain (3). One type of pole has an arrow-like end (1). Roast flour is added to the pile of offerings (2).





2

One of the most ancient beliefs of the Tibetan people is that the mountains are holy. This originated in the shamanistic Bon faith well before the introduction of Buddhism. Mountain worship has continued to the present day in every area where Tibetans live, although the details of the rites and their dates vary widely (see CHINA TOURISM no. 114).

One of these variations, as practised by Tibetan nomads living in the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is known as the 'Arrow-Planting' Ceremony. This too is celebrated at different times by different tribes, but it usually falls between the third and seventh lunar months.

In the fifth lunar month (about June) this year, I visited a grassland area in southern Gansu to observe the local tribe's 'Arrow-Planting' Ceremony.

Opinions vary as to the origin of this rite.

According to one legend, long, long ago a general commanding an army fighting away from home fell on the battlefield. The people of the locality associated him with the mountain on which he died, planting at its summit the arrows he carried with him, and started to venerate him as a god. Every year, the rite was repeated to remember him and beg his protection.

Another story goes that there was a certain man of dignity and fame who, after he died, was found by the gods to be too bad for heaven but too good for hell. Accordingly, he stayed on earth, creating a great deal of mischief and disturbing the peoples' peace. Eventually a Living Buddha took pity on him and settled him on the mountain, directing him to give up evil and devote himself to good, which he did. And thus, every year, the people honour him.

3



In fact, this appears to be a ritual to bless the new prayer-flags erected every year. One or two men from each family in the tribe take part in the ceremony (in most cases, women are excluded). Clad in new clothes and holding a pole in one hand, they gather on their horses at the place where the ceremony is to be held.

The wooden poles, five to seven metres long, can be divided into two kinds. One is fitted at the end with 'wings' like those of an arrow, brilliantly painted in a leopard-skin pattern and with rainbow stripes. The other type has attached to it strips of red, white and blue cloth which are actually prayer-flags and are covered with Tibetan Buddhist scriptures. This type of pole is tipped with a tuft of white fleece for luck.

When all the tribesmen are present, they ride up to the flat summit of the mountain in

single file, then 'plant' their 'arrows' (both types have pointed ends to facilitate sticking them upright in the ground).

A respected elder of the tribe directs the sacrificial rites. Each in turn lays roasted flour, butter, barley and tea on to a pile of heaped-up cypress branches, which are then set alight and burned. These are their offerings to the mountain god.

Next, moving clockwise around the clusters of prayer-flags, they throw up clouds of *feng ma* (wind horses), again for good luck. These are pieces of paper ten centimetres long by eight centimetres wide bearing a central image of a horse with the Three Jewels of Buddhism on his back and with a dragon, bird, tiger and lion in each corner. The name *feng ma* or *lung-ta* is ac-

tually also given to prayer-flags, since they too often bear these horses which gallop or fly in the wind.

Meanwhile, some of those present chant auspicious words and phrases, while others call repeatedly on the name of the god. They are praying to the mountain god to make their hopes and wishes come true: peace, security, thriving livestock and abundant harvests.

Finally, the tribesmen mount their horses again and circle the ashes of the fire and the 'arrows' three times to mark the end of the ceremony before riding away.

The winds blowing over the summit will carry the prayers on the prayer-flags to the presiding deity, at the same time dissipating evil influences and bringing good luck, happiness and prosperity to the tribe.

Translated by Chen Jiaji





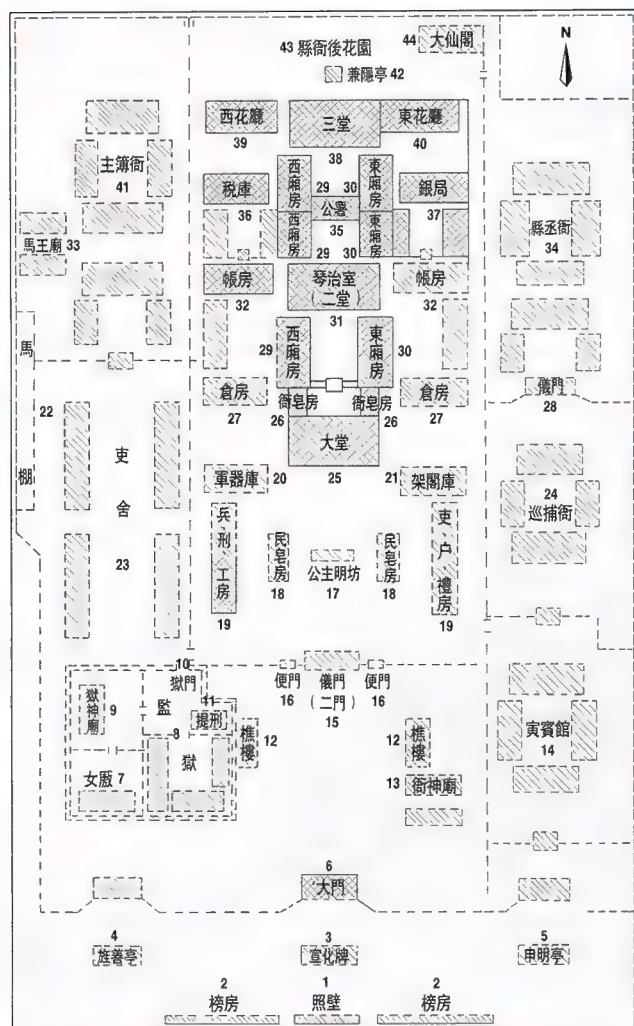
An elderly man shows his devotion (2), and a storm of feng ma marks the climax of the ceremony (1). Riding round the clusters of prayer-flags concludes the rite (3).



Behind the Yamen Gate

PHOTOS BY WANG YUEJIN ARTICLE BY TIAN HUO

Neixiang County Yamen



Hidden in a tangle of modern restaurants, shops and a department store lies the architectural complex housing the former *yamen* (magistrate's or law-enforcing office) of Neixiang, southwestern Henan Province. The main entrance to the *yamen* is actually tucked away behind a wine and cigarette shop in the town's Main East Street.

The wall on either side of the main gate curves inwards instead of running parallel to the street. This was a common feature of a *yamen* in the old days. People with a complaint to make used to beat the drum which always hung at the gate to ask for a public court hearing. The original drum here is missing.

There is an old Chinese saying that the *yamen* gate faces south but the penniless, even if their cause is just, had better not enter. Obviously this is a jibe at corrupt officials. To our delight we found that the *yamen* gate really did face south. Penniless or not, in we went!

Within the confines of the complex, all the floors and the courtyards are paved with grey bricks. This is said to be the best-preserved *yamen* still in existence. In an area of over 2,700 square metres it contains a total of 117 buildings, varying in size and height. The magistrate's offices are set on the central axis, flanked by a line of buildings on either side housing the offices of the assistant magistrates. These latter east and west wings are in poor condition at present; they are to be renovated in the near future, when the whole complex will become China's first *yamen* museum.

Built in 1894 in the late Qing dynasty, the complex was one of the largest of its kind in southwestern Henan and in adjacent areas of Hubei and Shaanxi. But in fact this has been the site of a series of such complexes, the earliest *yamen* dating from 1304 in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1369).

A path paved with the same grey bricks led us past the

The main gate of Neixiang's yamen retains its dignified appearance (1) and leads to the main hall where important cases were heard (2).

Legend

1. Screen wall 2. Public notices 3. Direction indicator 4. Jingshan Pavilion
5. Shenming Pavilion 6. Main gate 7. Women's prison 8. Prison 9. Prison God Temple 10. Prison gate 11. Torture chamber 12. Watch-tower
13. Yamen God Temple 14. Guesthouse 15. Ceremonial gate (2nd gate)
16. Side gate 17. Direction indicator 18. Guardroom 19. Six administrative offices: troops, punishments, works, staff, residents and ceremonies 20. Arsenal
21. Archives 22. Stables 23. Staff quarters 24. Bailiffs' office 25. Main Hall 26. Guardroom 27. Granary 28. Ceremonial gate 29. West living quarters 30. East living quarters 31. Qinzhi Hall (2nd hall) 32. Accounts office 33. Temple of the Horse King 34. County office 35. Sub-prefect's office 36. Tax room 37. Money office 38. Santang Hall 39. West Hall 40. East Hall 41. Secretary's office
42. Jianyin Pavilion 43. Rear garden 44. Daxian Pavilion

N.B. Plan compiled after *Annals of Neixiang County* of 1712

- Enclosing walls
- Existing buildings
- Former buildings (to be renovated)





1

2





迴避



prison to the main hall which is decorated with a horizontal inscription reading 'A clear mirror hung on high'. This meant that wise judgement was expected to be passed on perpetrators of evil. Under this board the magistrate used to give his verdict in the so-called Nuange (Warm Chamber). In front, embedded in the floor, are two flat stones from the Ming dynasty on which the plaintiff and the defendant had to kneel. A metre-long table and a wooden armchair stand on the wooden dais, with a rack containing arrow-shaped tokens of command and a black folding fan close at hand. At sight of this arrangement the visitor is immediately reminded of the common scene in Chinese operas and dramas where the magistrate, wearing the winged black cap of office, seated in his armchair, bangs the table with his wooden token sternly, instilling terror in the accused.... The ceiling of the Nuange is divided into checkered designs, each with a crane flying toward the Eight Diagrams in the centre, symbolizing the division of territory by the Zhou-dynasty emperors.

Apart from being the courtroom, the main hall served as a reception area where the magistrate would receive other dignitaries, and important ceremonies would also be held here. The rooms at the back of the hall used to be where the three squads of yamen runners and bailiffs would sit or rest until needed.

Continuing, we came to the Chongguang Gate, which was closed, so we went through a side entrance. In fact it was the first gate at which the magistrate would greet his guests, and was normally closed; it was thrown open only on important occasions. Above the gate is a board inscribed with the principles by which the magistrate was supposed to administer the law.

The courtyard behind the Chongguang Gate is spacious. In the centre stands Qinzhi Hall, the second hall, impressive with its black pillars and grey tiles, which was

used as a civil court. On both sides of the magistrate's table stand instruments of torture, one of which was primarily for female offenders. This is a sort of stool pierced by holes through which cord or leather strips were tied to hold the woman's hands firmly. Her hands were then whipped or beaten — not a pretty image. The legal process in the past demanded that the accused must confess fully before being sentenced, and torture was routinely applied to extract such a confession.

At the back of this hall there is a large black gate — the second ceremonial gate. The courtyard beyond is shaded by two old trees, one an orange osmanthus said to have been planted in the Yuan dynasty, the other an evergreen, *Nandina domestica*. The magistrate's office stands in this courtyard, and would have represented the third place where the magistrate would greet his most honoured guests. It was also called the 'three-foot forbidden ground', as no commoner was permitted to pass through it.

The Santang (Third Hall) is at the very rear of the complex. Here too the ground is paved with grey bricks.

Secluded but spacious, this was the magistrate's private residence where he spent his leisure hours. The halls on either side were his family's living quarters.

A magistrate's job was all-encompassing: he had to administer the affairs of the county, act as judge and jury



4

Qinzhi Hall was the civil court (1). The two stones show the positions for plaintiff and defendant to kneel (2), while the stool was an instrument of torture reserved for women (4). The magistrate's sitting room in more elegant style (3) and the ceremonial Chongguang Gate (5).



5

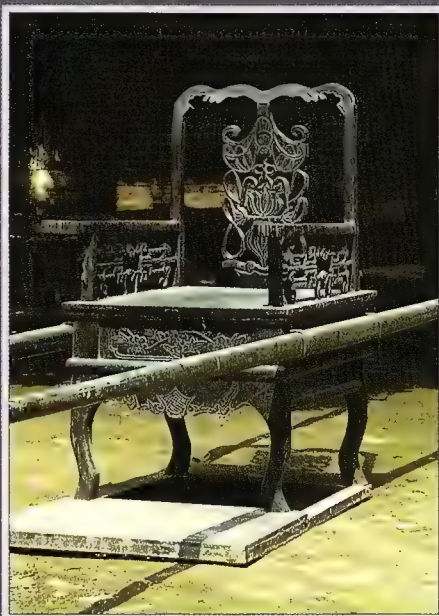


on civil and criminal cases, develop agriculture, help the afflicted, punish evil-doers and promote education. Magistrates often had to investigate difficult cases personally, acting as a sort of detective. A whole body of Chinese literature, starting around 1600, was based on the magistrate or judge's unravelling of crimes. Flicking through the *Annals of Neixiang County* I found one complex real-life case which had been solved with some ingenuity by the magistrate of the time, obviously an upright and conscientious man.

In the mid-fifteenth century (during the Ming dynasty) a young man, Niu Tianchu, and an elderly man, Lǚ Shezhang, came to beat the drum at the *yamen* gate to voice a grievance and demand justice. The older man stated that, many years before, Niu Tianchu's father, Niu Tianrui, and his elder brother, Niu Tianjiang, had drawn up an agreement concerning the property to be inherited by Niu Tianchu. Niu Tianrui and his family later moved to Shaanxi. After his father died (his mother having died earlier), Niu Tianchu brought the ashes back to their ancestral home, Neixiang. In the meantime, however, his uncle Niu Tianjiang – who only had a daughter – had decided he wanted his son-in-law to inherit the family property. When Niu Tianchu went to their house, his aunt refused to acknowledge him as her nephew and seized the agreement from him. She got so cross at his insistence that she hit him on the head with a stick!

After hearing the plaintiffs' story, the magistrate conceived a plan. He hid Niu Tianchu away and ordered Niu Tianjiang's wife to present herself before the court. He told her that Niu Tianchu had died of tetanus after she had hit him. 'This is murder but, if Niu Tianchu was your nephew,' the magistrate told her, 'your action would be construed as manslaughter instead, and you would not therefore be subject to capital punishment.' Terrified, the woman admitted that Niu Tianchu was indeed her nephew and produced the original agreement, so everything turned out well for the plaintiffs. The main reason for their concern was that Niu Tianchu had since childhood been affianced to Lǚ Shezhang's daughter; now the marriage could take place. The magistrate used his knowledge of human psychology cunningly to trick the aunt into her confession.

Translated by He Fei



The eastern and western wings of the yamen need renovation (1). The magistrate might take a sedan-chair (3) or a horse-drawn carriage (2) when he ventured into the countryside on inspection. The enclosed bed-chamber forms a 'room within a room' (4).



Yellow River Pebble Sculpture

PHOTOS & TEXT BY
ZHU YANMING

The vast numbers of pebbles to be found on the bed of the Huanghe (Yellow River) make an ideal raw material for original works of art. Washed and worn smooth by the waters over thousands of years, these pebbles are of many different shapes and sizes, of variegated shades and interesting textures.

The artist Zhao Henian of Lanzhou, Gansu Province, has been inspired by the beauty of these pebbles to create a wide range of ingenious sculptures. He divides his work into three categories — natural, roughly worked and finely worked — creating pieces in relief and also painted pieces, either singly or combined into groups. All his work is imbued with a strong sense of naturalism and his obvious respect for his materials shines through in every piece he makes.



Brief Rest

The body of the swan is created from a single round pebble, whose variegated shades and pleasing texture skilfully represent the plumage of this beautiful bird.

Pilgrimage

This scene is based on the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West*. Pigsy, one of the disciples of the Tang monk Xuan Zang, who travelled to the Western Regions in the quest for Buddhist sutras, is carved from a rough pebble. The nature of the White-Bone Demon (one of the evil spirits encountered on the journey) is revealed by the misshapen pebble used for her skull. Standing in the centre, Monkey creates a balance between the other two.





Predatory Gaze

The artist has chosen a rough stone for the eagle's body to convey the texture of its feathers. In style it somewhat resembles the ink paintings executed by the famous eccentric artist Zhu Da (c. 1626–1705) of the Ming dynasty, also known as Bada Shanren (Mountain Hermit). In stark contrast, the eagle's prey is created from a shiny black pebble.

Jiang Taigong Angling

This ornamental piece perfectly reflects the natural beauty of Yellow River pebbles. The veining on the stone used for the body evokes folds in the long robe worn by Jiang Taigong (legendary character who assisted the first king of the Western Zhou dynasty (c.11th century–771 B.C.) to found the dynasty and manage state affairs). The stone in front of him with its different bands of colour is obviously his fishing creel. In the mythological novel *Glorified Divinities* written in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Jiang Taigong went angling not to catch fish but to await a prince who would come to seek his advice.



Mother and Son

The appeal of these two tortoises, each consisting of one large and five small pebbles, lies in their simplicity. The mother tortoise is clambering up to see what her young one is up to, vividly demonstrating the concern of any mother for her child.



Beijing Opera Scene

A long black pebble with white markings is cleverly combined with a smooth whitish pebble to create the image of an upright official, while a misshapen stone and an indented yellow pebble perfectly capture the almost cringing figure of a poor man. 

Translated by Gu Weizhou





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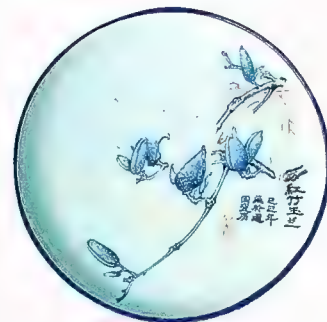
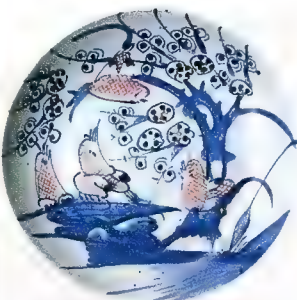


JINGDEZHEN

China's Ceramics Capital



Left: the prize-winning parasol tree dinner service (top, photo supplied by Jingdezhen Foreign Affairs Bureau); the street market near Renmin Square (bottom, by Tai Chi Yin). Right, from top: vases of eggshell porcelain (by Chan Yat Nin); three replicas of blue-and-white ware, some with underglaze red (all by Liu Jiangyuan); a modern blue-and-white plaque (by Tai Chi Yin); modern versions of sacrificial red and yingqing wares (both by Liu Jiangyuan).



Pottery and porcelain have, for centuries, been some of China's major contributions to international trade.

As we note in our Special Features article in this issue, Jingdezhen in Jiangxi is believed to have started pottery production early on, although there are as yet no substantiating finds prior to the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). The fame of the Jingdezhen kilns was underlined with the imperial seal of approval for their *yingqing* wares in the Jingde reign (1004-1007).

The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) saw the development of cities, the economy and trade in general. Iron smelting, steel making, shipyards, ceramics, textiles and building expanded. Jingdezhen became the national porcelain centre, with nearly three hundred government and private kilns. There were many technological innovations: for example, kiln furnaces were built oval instead of hemispherical, enabling more vessels to be fired per kiln load and permitting better control of firing.

Other Ming-dynasty innovations at Jingdezhen included the polychrome enamelled *doucai* (literally, 'clashing colours') — a combination between underglaze blue and overglaze colours including red, yellow, green and purple — introduced between 1465 and 1487 and *wuca* ('five colours') which flourished particularly from 1522 to 1620 in this dynasty. It was also at this time that the super-thin eggshell porcelain was developed. In fact, during the Ming and the succeeding Qing dynasty (1644-1911), Jingdezhen was the centre of Chinese ceramics production.

Pottery and porcelain wares were important export items as early as the Southern Song (1127-1279). Goods from Jingdezhen were shipped to Korea and Japan and made their way to Southeast Asia, the Arab world and the coasts of northeast Africa. Trade increased significantly during the Yuan (1271-1368) and Ming dynasties.

Chinese porcelain proper was first imported to Europe in the fifteenth century; the export trade reached considerable proportions by the seventeenth century and provoked the attempt to create imitations. However, it was only at the beginning of the eighteenth century that the true Chinese recipe for hard porcelain was reproduced in Germany at



Dresden, then at Meissen, spreading gradually throughout Europe.

Japan received the technique rather earlier when, during the Zhengde reign (1506-1521) of the Ming dynasty, a Japanese monk who had studied for five years at Jingdezhen began production at Arita.

During the Qing dynasty, the city had several thousand households engaged in porcelain manufacture, with more than 100,000 craftsmen. Apart from the development of polychrome enamelled wares such as the celebrated *famille verte* and *famille rose*, the official kilns produced highly sophisticated monochrome wares. The shapes were kept spare and simple, but the glazes were superb.

They are often known to Western connoisseurs by their French names: *soufflé* or powder blue, *fleur-de-pêche* (peachbloom), *clair-de-lune* (moon white, the palest tinge of lavender), *café-au-lait*, a pale coffee colour, *rouge-de-fer* (iron or coral red), *sang-de-boeuf* (ox-blood), plus yellow, apple green, mirror black and the subtle mottled greenish brown known as tea-dust. The invention of several of these glazes is attributed to Zang Yingxuan, the director of the imperial kilns who, in 1683, supervised their rebuilding after the upheavals of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties.

The Ceramics Industry Today

Modern Jingdezhen, a city with a population of over one million, is China's largest producer of ceramic wares for everyday use. In 1985, the city's gross output of ceramics was valued at more than 200 million yuan — about 40% of gross industrial output. Around one-third of this went for export and accounted for around 14% of China's export trade in ceramics; the figure included sanitary wares, electrical ceramics (such as porcelain insulators), and glazed tiles for construction purposes. Jingdezhen has trading links with over 100 countries and regions around the world.

The Jiangxi Provincial Ceramic Industry Company administers about 60,000 workers and some

156 ceramics factories with around 24 enterprises providing direct services to the industry. Apart from mining and processing of raw materials and production of ceramic wares, the local industry also encompasses the manufacture of relevant machinery, kiln construction, and ceramics chemistry, research and education. The city is home to the Ceramic Industrial Scientific Research Institute, set up by the Ministry of Light Industry, as well as the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, a national institute of higher learning which provides courses in ceramic production, ceramic engineering and artistic design.

Although they are nowhere near the same class as the matchless pieces of the past, ceramic wares from Jingdezhen have won several prizes since 1979. The State Gold Medal for quality has been awarded to the 45-piece parasol tree dinner service made by the Renmin (People's) Porcelain Factory (no doubt familiar to Hong Kong residents and visitors from the China Products department stores!); to the 'Fushou' brand *famille rose* ware from the Yishu Porcelain Factory; and to the 'Wanyu' brand rice pattern ware with underglaze blue designs from the Guangming Porcelain Factory.

There has also been recognition at the international level. For example, the parasol tree dinner service mentioned above won gold medals at the Leipzig Spring Fair in East Germany in 1984, at the 15th Brno Consumer Goods International Fair in Czechoslovakia, and at the 56th Poznan International Fair in Poland.

Despite the preponderance of everyday wares, many of the factories at Jingdezhen still turn out reproductions of the exquisite wares which emanated from the kilns during the glorious Ming and Qing days, including *yingqing* (misty blue), *qinghua* (blue and white), various monochrome and polychrome glazed wares including *famille rose*, and eggshell porcelain. Interestingly enough, even the rice pattern ware so favoured for its simple elegance by today's housewife was being produced in limited quantities for the imperial household as early as the Yongle reign (1403-1424) of the Ming



dynasty. Rice does not play a part in the manufacturing process! Holes are hollowed out in a certain pattern on the biscuit body and filled with a translucent glaze before firing.

The city has no shortage of retail and wholesale outlets for those interested in buying ceramics at whatever level and in whatever quantities. Of the official retail outlets, the Jingdezhen Porcelain Friendship Store on Central Zhushan Road specializes in porcelain and ceramics.

For business purposes, the local branch of the China Crafts Import-Export Corporation at 37 South Zhongshan Road would probably be the first stop. The corporation can arrange for production according to clients' designs and shapes. Its representatives are generally on hand at the twice-yearly Guangzhou Fair, and there are branch offices in Shanghai and Guangzhou, with a sales network extending to eighty countries.

Apart from the prize-winning factories mentioned above, the Renmin Porcelain Factory with its blue-and-white wares and the Guangming Porcelain Factory with its rice pattern wares in underglaze blue, there are many others. The Yishu (Art) Porcelain Factory specializes in *famille rose*, eggshell porcelain and decorative articles. The Jianguo Porcelain Factory, founded in 1949, has its own research institute which has not only reinstated production of monochrome glaze wares, but developed new glazes. The Sculpted Porcelain Factory, established in 1957, produces fancy porcelain figurines on a wide variety of traditional Chinese themes — Buddhas and immortals, birds and fishes, pavilions and pagodas — which have proved to be particularly popular with customers in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and Macau. 

From left to right: parasol tree dish (by Tai Chi Yin); Ming-dynasty doucai jar with qilin (supplied by Jingdezhen Foreign Affairs Bureau); blue-and-white rice pattern lantern (by Xu An); three modern ceramic items (all by Liu Jiangyuan); Qing-dynasty famille rose plate (supplied by Jingdezhen Foreign Affairs Bureau); parasol tree dish (by Tai Chi Yin).

Jingdezhen's First International Ceramics Festival

The first International Ceramics Festival to be staged at Jingdezhen took place this year from 11–14 October. Established porcelain craftsmen and women were on hand to make porcelain pieces which were then auctioned off during the course of the festival. There were also lectures and seminars on antique porcelain of the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties; an exhibition featuring such antiques and illustrating the development of ceramics and the history of Jingdezhen; visits to the ancient china clay diggings at Gaoling, the ruins of the kiln site at Hutian and the Longzhu imperial kiln site; an essay competition and an international ceramic contest that included artistic ceramics and modern everyday ceramic wares.

Visitors had the option of taking several tours in and around the city, including to famous Jiangxi attractions such as Mount Lushan, Lake Poyang, the provincial capital Nanchang, and Wuyuan County.

The festival attracted large numbers of tourists as well as business executives, the Taiwanese being particularly strongly represented. Apparently, special charter flights had been arranged for them. Certainly, the charter flights which operate between Hong Kong and Nanchang every Tuesday and Friday were sold out during the period. In 1989, according to statistics for the entire province, there were about 300,000 visitors from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

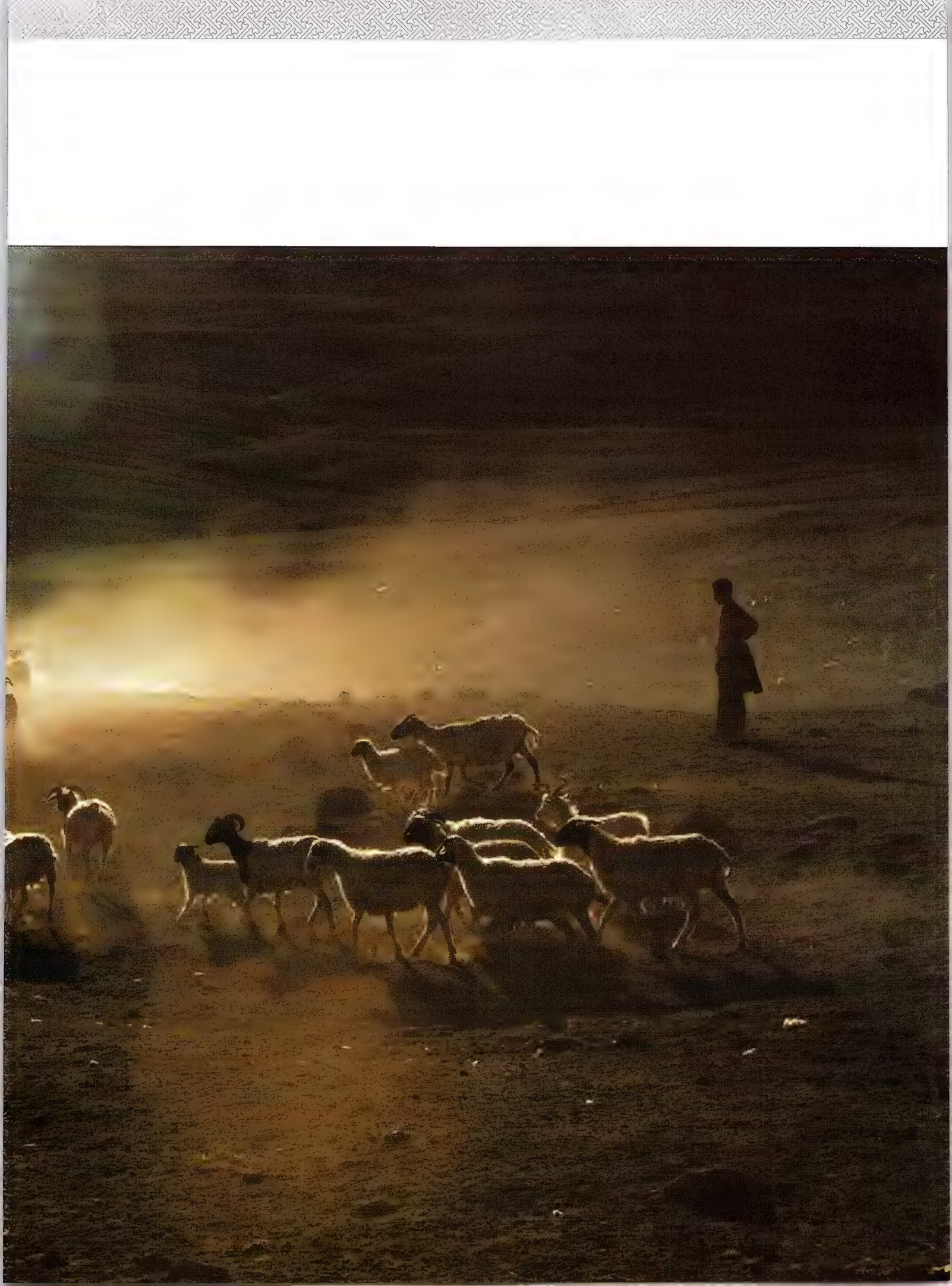
In all, the four-day festival is reported to have grossed US\$5 million in sales of ceramic articles. Both this figure and the number of visitors are said to have surpassed the expectations of the organizers.

**PHOTOGRAPHER:
ZHENG YUNFENG**

New pastures call....

A shepherd and his dog supervise
the movement of the flocks across
the dry and dusty uplands of
Qinghai. 





A Great Lake



Towards the end of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), uprising followed uprising as popular armies, secret societies and warlords jostled for power. Some of the most powerful rebel leaders in southern China were Chen Youliang (1320-1362) and Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398). The ambitious Zhu, son of a farm worker, who had joined a rebel army which occupied his hometown in Anhui Province in 1352, had sufficient power by 1360 to tackle Chen as a first step to seizing overall control.

Taken from Vol. 7: *The Ming Period* from the 'Stories of Chinese People' series published by the Chongqing Publishing House



Chen Youliang himself, the son of a fisherman, had risen through the ranks of a mystical militant sect. At this time his army was stronger than Zhu's but less united.

In 1361 Zhu led his assembled forces, including his numerous fleet of ships, to attack Jiujiang on the River Yangtse in northern Jiangxi which was then Chen's major base of operations.



After taking Jiujiang, Zhu went on to take Anqing in southern Anhui following Chen's retreat. However, he failed to capture Chen who had fled before his arrival. Needing to deal with another strong rival army, Zhu then led his troops north as far as Xuzhou in Jiangsu.

Battle

DRAWINGS BY WU XUJING



In 1363, Chen retaliated by attacking Nanchang, where Zhu's nephew was stationed. Zhu immediately brought 200,000 men in his ships along the Yangtse from Anhui. This navy met Chen's — said to be 600,000 strong — on Lake Poyang and a great battle ensued.



Chen's ships were taller and were drawn up in more serried lines, so Zhu sent out small fire boats laden with explosives and reeds under cover of darkness; they were rowed right into the middle of Chen's fleet. The subsequent explosions destroyed some of Chen's ships and damaged many others. Zhu bombarded the enemy with cannonshot and arrows.



After six days of fighting, Chen's fleet was finished. The lake was littered with dead bodies, burned-out hulls, masts.... Chen himself attempted to escape in a small boat but, as fate would have it, he stuck his head out of the cabin to get a better view and was hit by a stray arrow. He died, and his son surrendered with all his men.

Zhu went on to eliminate most of his rivals. Having proclaimed a new dynasty at Nanjing, he eventually marched on Dadu (as Beijing, capital of the Yuan, was then known), putting an end to the Yuan dynasty in 1368. He is thus better known to history as Emperor Taizu of the Ming dynasty. 

Translated by M.K.

Poems in or on Jiangxi

It is quite some time since we selected poetry for this column, but Jiangxi Province with its literary associations seems to lend itself to this treatment.

In CHINA TOURISM no. 123 we presented an article on the famous Tengwang Tower in the provincial capital, Nanchang. Built in 653 in the Tang dynasty, the tower played host to a constant stream of travelling scholars, poets and officials, many of whom were inspired by its views and architectural beauty to flights of poetic fancy.

One of the most indefatigable of such travellers (he was also a distinguished statesman) was Su Dongpo (1037-1101), also known as Su Shi, of the Northern Song. A native of Sichuan, he seems to have been everywhere and seen everything (often during periods of exile), and to have penned inscriptions or verses for every conceivable experience. We include a short philosophical poem on Mount Lushan, a famous beauty spot then as now, which he visited in 1084.

Xin Qiji (1140-1207) lived a little later in the Song dynasty but was from the northeast, from Shandong. Living in more turbulent times, he

held a number of minor official posts. His concern at the fate of the country was expressed in a great number of his more than six hundred poems.

One of the most influential poets of the mid-Tang was Bai Juyi (772-846), a native of Taiyuan in Shanxi. An adviser at court, he presented many memorials proposing social reforms and wrote political satires as well as poems exposing injustice. Falling foul of authority, he was demoted in 815 to the assistant prefectship of Jiujiang, then known as Jiangzhou. He stayed there until 818. This was equivalent in his eyes to being sent into exile, as we see from the longest of the poems reproduced here. He is said to have been responsible for building the Yanshui (Mist and Water) Pavilion on Lake Gantang in Jiujiang.

Li Bai (701-762) was another rover. Born in Central Asia, he moved back to Sichuan with his family when he was five; he is perhaps the most colourful and exuberant of all Chinese poets. It is known that he visited Lushan three times: in 725, 756 (when he stayed for six months, building himself a cottage where he lived the life of a recluse), and 761. He wrote no

less than twenty-four poems on Mount Lushan. The waterfall described in the one given here is the celebrated Kaixian Waterfall.

Finally — and not strictly linked to the 'written in or on Jiangxi' theme — a most beautiful poem by Wang Wei (701-761) of the Tang. A great painter and an accomplished musician, Wang for many represents the classical ideal of the cultured scholar-official. A dedicated Chan (Zen) Buddhist, often retiring or being forced to retire (by banishment) to remote mountains, he evokes the themes of nature and meditation time and again. This poem seems to conjure up the sheer vastness and silence of a body of water such as Lake Poyang, although the poet was born in Shanxi and lived most of his life in Shaanxi.

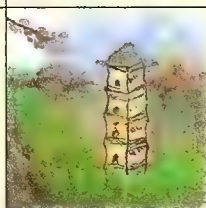
All taken from *Poetry and Prose of the Tang and Song*, except for the poem by Wang Wei, which comes from *Laughing Lost in the Mountains — Selected Poems of Wang Wei*; all reproduced by kind permission of Panda Books, Chinese Literature Press, Beijing

All translated by Yang Xianyi & Gladys Yang except for 'Drifting on the Lake', translated by Tony Barnstone, Willis Barnstone & Xu Haixin

Written on the Wall of Xilin Monastery

Su Dongpo

*This side a range of hills and there a peak;
From different vantage points, a different mountain.
To me it is not given to know the true face of Lushan.
Because I am upon it.*

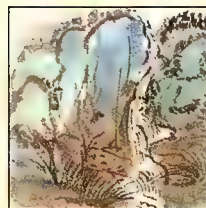


Watching the Waterfall at Lushan

Li Bai

*In sunshine Censer Peak breathes purple vapour,
Far off hangs the cataract, a stream upended;
Down it cascades a sheer three thousand feet —
As if the Silver River* were falling from Heaven!*

* The Chinese name for the Milky Way

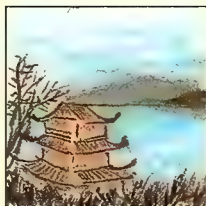


Written on the Wall at Zaokou in Jiangxi

Xin Qiji

*Past Yugu Tower flows the Qing
Bearing the tears of countless wayfarers,
And I gaze northwest towards Chang'an
Dismayed by all the hills that lie between.*

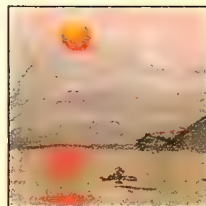
*Green mountains are no bar
To the Qing flowing on to the sea,
But as dusk falls on the stream my heart is heavy
When I hear the cuckoos calling deep in the hills.*

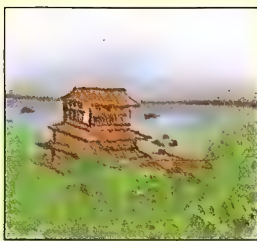


Drifting on the Lake

Wang Wei

*Autumn is crisp and the firmament far,
especially far from where people live.
I look at cranes on the sand
and am immersed in joy when I see mountains
beyond the clouds.
Dusk tints the crystal ripples.
Leisurely the white moon comes out.
Tonight I am with my oar, alone, and can do
everything,
yet waver, not willing to return.*





Song of the Lute Player

Bai Juyi

In 815, the tenth year of the Yuan He period, I was demoted to the assistant prefectship of Jiujiang. The next autumn while seeing a friend off at Penpu, I heard someone strumming a lute in a boat at night, playing with the touch of a musician from the capital. I found upon inquiry that the lutist was a courtesan from Chang'an who had learned from the musicians Mu and Cao but, growing old and losing her looks, she had married a merchant. Then I ordered drinks and asked her to play a few tunes. After playing, in deep distress, she told me of the pleasures of her youth and said now that her beauty had faded she was drifting from place to place by rivers and lakes. In my two years as an official away from the capital I had been resigned enough, my mind at peace, but moved by her tale that night I began to take my demotion and exile to heart. So I wrote a long poem and presented it to her. It has six hundred and twelve words and I call it the "Song of the Lute Player".

*By the Xunyang River a guest is seen off one night;
Chill the autumn, red the maple leaves and the
reeds are in flower;*

*The host alights from his horse, the guest is aboard,
They raise their cups to drink but have no music.
Drunk without joy, in sadness they must part;
At the time of parting the river seems steeped in
moonlight;*

*Suddenly out on the water a lute is heard;
The host forgets to turn back, the guest delays going.
Seeking the sound in the dark, we ask who is the player.
The lute is silent; hesitant the reply.
Rowing closer, we ask if we may meet the musician,
Call for more wine, trim the lamp and resume our feast;
Only after a thousand entreaties does she appear,
Her face half hidden behind the lute in her arms.
She tunes up and plucks the strings a couple of times,
Touching our hearts before ever the tune is played;
Each chord strikes a pensive note*

*As if voicing the disillusion of a lifetime;
Her head is bent, her fingers stray over the strings
Pouring out the infinite sorrows of her heart.
Lightly she pinches in the strings, slowly she strums
and plucks them;*

*First The Rainbow Garments, then The Six Minor
Notes.*

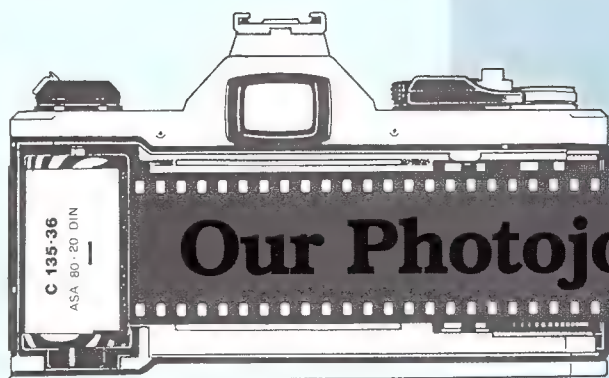
*The high notes wail like pelting rain,
The low notes whisper like soft confidences;
Wailing and whispering interweave
Like pearls large and small cascading on plate of jade,
Like a warbling oriole gliding below the blossom,
Like a mountain brook purling down a bank,
Till the brook turns to ice, the strings seem about
to snap,*

*About to snap, and for one instant all is still
Only an undertone of quiet grief
Is more poignant in the silence than any sound;
Then a silver bottle is smashed, out gushes the water,
Mailed riders charge, their swords and lances clang!
When the tune ends, she draws her plectrum
full across
And the four strings give a sound like the tearing
of silk.*

*Right and left of the boat all is silence —
We see only the autumn moon, silver in mid-stream.
Pensively she puts the plectrum between the strings,
Straightens her clothes, rises and composes herself.
She is, she says, a girl from the capital
Whose family once lived at the foot of Toad Hill.
At thirteen she learned to play the lute
And ranked first among the musicians;
Her playing was admired by the old masters,
Her looks were the envy of other courtesans;
Youths from wealthy districts vied in their gifts
to engage her,
A single song brought her countless rolls of red silk;
Jewelled and silver trinkets were smashed as men used
them to mark the beat;
Silk skirts as red as blood were stained by spilt wine.
Pleasure and laughter from one year to the next,
While the autumn moon and spring breeze passed
unheeded.
Then her brother joined the army, her aunt died,*

*The days and nights slipped by and her beauty faded,
No more carriages and horsemen thronged her gate,
And growing old she became a merchant's wife.
All the merchant's thought is of profit: to seek it
he leaves her.*

*Two months ago he went to Fuliang to buy tea,
Leaving her alone in the boat at the mouth of
the river;
All around the moonlight is bright, the river is cold,
And late at night, dreaming of her girlhood,
She cries in her sleep, staining her rouged cheeks
with tears.
The music of her lute has made me sigh,
And now she tells this plaintive tale of sorrow;
We are both ill-starred, drifting on the face of
the earth;
No matter if we were strangers before this encounter.
Last year I bade the imperial city farewell;
A demoted official, I lay ill in Xunyang;
Xunyang is a paltry place without any music,
For one year I heard no wind instruments, no strings.
Now I live on the low, damp flat by the River Pen,
Round my house yellow reeds and bitter bamboos
grow ripe;
From dawn till dusk I hear no other sounds
But the wailing of night-jars and the moaning
of apes.
On a day of spring blossom by the river or
moonlit night in autumn
I often call for wine and drink alone;
Of course, there are rustic songs and village pipes,
But their shrill discordant notes grate on my ears;
Tonight listening to your luting
Was like hearing fairy music; it gladdened my ears.
Don't refuse, but sit down and play another tune,
And I'll write a Song of the Lute Player for you.
Touched by my words, she stands there for some
time,
Then goes back to her seat and plays with
quickened tempo
Music sadder far than the first melody,
And at the sound not a man of us has dry eyes.
The assistant prefect of Jingzhou is so moved
That his blue coat is wet with tears. **G***



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY LAM KIN FAI

Editor's note: Many lovers of photography write in to express their admiration for our photographers and their work, often saying how much they envy their opportunities to travel around. However, the photographs you see in our magazine are actually the result of hard work and a considerable degree of planning. Here, for a change, our senior photojournalists Ma Yiu Chun, Chan Yat Nin and Wang Miao (now our special correspondent in China) talk about their experiences.

Question: What are your basic equipment needs when you are out on assignment?

Answer: Generally, we use 135 mm single-lens reflex (SLR) cameras since they are relatively light and versatile, permitting use of many lenses. You can also use different types of film with these cameras.

We normally take at least two camera bodies with us. One of them needs to be a multiple-function electronic camera, easy to operate. Another should have a metal body, solid and robust, which you are not afraid you will damage under rough conditions. And, if possible, you should have one more camera body as a spare, just in case. With three camera bodies in hand, you have a choice of camera for different purposes or in different situations.

We take a variety of lenses ranging from 20 mm to 300 mm. A zoom lens is a must because of speed of handling and versatility. A macro lens is also important. Wide-aperture telephoto lenses and large zooms are heavy and inconvenient to carry, so we take these rarely. But a mirror-reflex super-telephoto lens is light and comes in very handy.

Of course you need to take special lenses and accessories for your particular purpose. If you want pictures of a cultural relic, you will need a wide-aperture standard or medium telephoto lens. For wild animal photography, you will need a 300 mm or more telephoto lens plus a teleconverter. When photographing in an

enclosed space such as a cave, a 17 mm super-wide-angle lens may prove essential.

But there are various other things you need to take into account. Is the place you're going to in the mountains or on the plain? Will there be people available to help you or will you be on

your own? How far will you have to walk? Only then can you decide what you should take.

As for accessories, a flash gun and tripod are essential. If a tripod is too heavy, we take a monopod. This has the added bonus that you can use it as a walking stick in the mountains!

A motor drive has advantages and disadvantages. It has its uses but adds weight. Filters are necessary, but depend very much on the photographer's personal preferences. Polarizing filters are always useful.

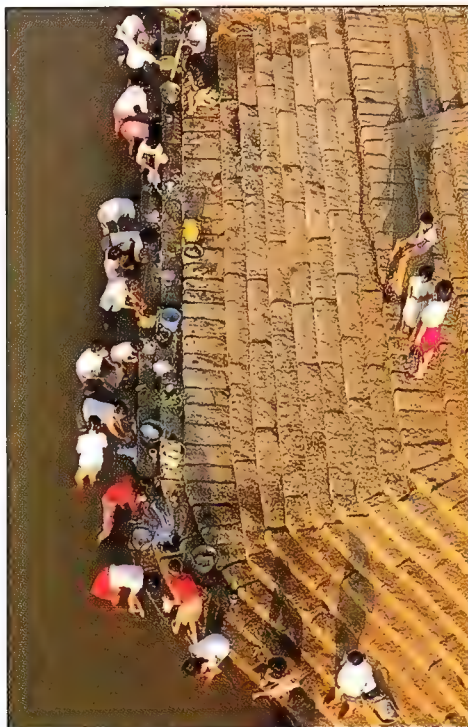
We generally use daylight slide film (ISO 100) suitable for printing. When shooting under special circumstances, we may need either low-speed or high-speed tungsten film. We also need to think about the season and the temperatures we're likely to find, since this can affect the choice of film.

Q: What is the main point or consideration in your work and how does this differ from that of an art photographer?

A: The main point of a photojournalist's work is that he or she has to capture many different facets of the object or scene in question. This is because our purpose is to reflect reality. We have to think from the editorial angle, not just take what appeals to us personally or go for the 'one perfect shot'.

However, each photo should be an artistic work in its own right and has to be dealt with individually with great care so as to give the article on the subject the correct effect. We also have to bear in mind the promotional tourism aspects.

The main difference between our work and an art photographer's can easily be seen, for instance, from the photos published in CHINA TOURISM no. 90 on the subject of Mount Huangshan. An art photographer tends to concentrate on the pure beauty of misty peaks, eerily contorted pine trees, grotesquely shaped rocks, and so on. Such photos certainly express mood wonderfully. However, they do not provide readers with a very clear picture of



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the actual conditions on the mountain. A photojournalist therefore presents a number of photos designed to show the potential visitor the paths on the mountain, the people you might see there, including monks and climbers, the weather, the general environment — in other words, we need to present a more complete picture. In fact, issue no. 90 contains splendid examples of both these aspects of photography.

Someone once said that an art photographer waits until there is no one else around before he presses the shutter, but that a photojournalist waits until there are people around before taking his photo. Their pictures may be of the same scene, but their approach is completely different.

Q: There are often what we can perhaps call 'representative shots' in an article on one particular subject in CHINA TOURISM. How do you get these? Do you ever have to resort to artificial arrangements?

A: We try to include photos which reflect the main features of the subject. It is not the case that the photojournalist just happens to get one or two good shots — it is the result of considerable effort. We need to study the place



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In CHINA TOURISM no. 99 there is an article entitled 'Phoenix in the Hills: Fenghuang', which has a photo showing a rooftop eave carving of a phoenix. It vividly highlights the unique feature of this small town in western Hunan. This picture is actually a double exposure. First the photographer shot the moon hanging huge and

Fenghuang, though double-exposed, was taken on the spot, not created in the darkroom.

However, we do occasionally have to arrange a scene. This is because, sometimes, for example at a festival or a special dance performance, everything is happening so fast that we miss some crucial moment. In such circumstances, we have to make some kind of compromise. We may ask the people involved to perform again so that we can catch their mood. This is quite different from posing a scene, which would look totally lifeless. But can this be called 'artificial arrangement'? We leave it to readers to judge for themselves.

Q: Is there a knack involved in getting the ideal picture without slipping into cliché?

A: This is a very general question and there's no definite answer. What is 'ideal', after all? Ordinary scenic snapshots are not what we or our readers are after; the beauty of a scene is not enough for our magazine. However, it isn't easy to find a fresh approach. On many occasions we are restricted by the context or the surroundings. On the northern grasslands, for example, you cannot climb up to get a bird's-eye view — there's nowhere to climb to! We often resort to light effects for interest. At dusk or maybe at night. One incidental advantage of night-time photography is that it eliminates unsightly odds and ends such as electric cables, telephone wires, etc.

If a setting or background seems rather mundane, you will find that including people in it will enliven it because human moods and



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before we leave home and work out some basic ideas, some angles, for a possible article. Then, when we get to our destination, we need to have a good sense of timing and also keep our plan in mind.

However, it does happen that the most representative scene of somewhere would not be particularly attractive, and then we have to use our judgement. For instance, we may be able to use a certain light or a particular angle to get the desired effect (see photo no. 3 here).

golden in the sky, then he shot the phoenix eave ornament, producing a single beautiful photo.

The basic requirements for our magazine pictures are that they should be natural and true to life, reflecting the subject. Even this one in

1 A special angle can give the mundane more interest, as in this scene of the River Gan at Ganzhou, Jiangxi

2 One way to bring out the true size of the Great Buddha at Leshan in Sichuan is to get somebody to perch on one of its toes!

3 A calculated distortion of colour under streetlamps, imperceptible to the naked eye, gives an eerie, greenish cast to yurts in Inner Mongolia



movements are changing all the time. This helps you avoid dullness in a standard shot although, of course, you still need the basic skills such as composition, focusing, calculation of exposure time and so on.

To avoid clichés, you need to break away from the 'ordinary' way of looking at things. Take the Imperial Palace in Beijing, for example, one of the most-photographed places in China. Or any other important site in Beijing, for that matter. Differences in time of day or weather conditions, a choice of a different lens or camera angle, etc., will produce very different photographs. You just need to think about it, give yourself plenty of time, and you will get good results (see CHINA TOURISM no. 86).

When we were taking photos of the Hulun Buir Grassland for CHINA TOURISM no. 83, we used a series of shots in a panoramic spread in order to give fullest expression to the sheer vastness of the landscape. We chose the correct position, set the tripod, then fired off shots one after another. When the slides were developed, we linked them together. But editing and connecting was a demanding task and, as usual, we took many more pictures than necessary. Luckily, the herds of horses co-operated by staying in the same spot. Without their presence, the final result would not have been nearly as interesting.

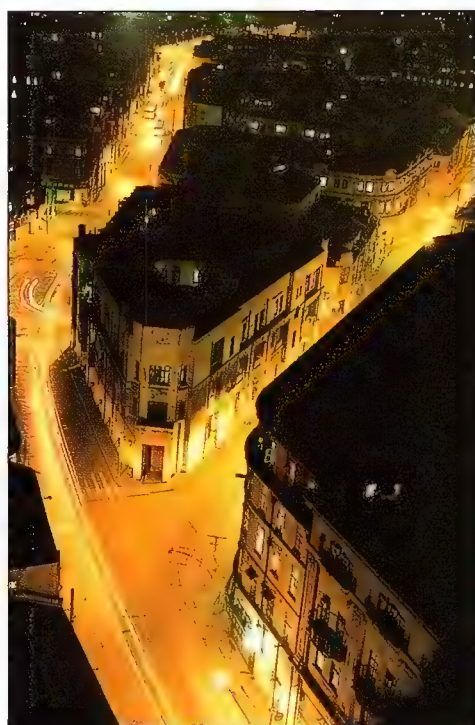
Another way of approaching the problem is to use special equipment such as a fish-eye lens or mirror-reflex lens which can give most unusual results. The photo of Beijing's Tian'anmen Square used on the cover of CHINA TOURISM no. 109 was taken from a high point with a fish-eye lens. However, since this type of lens produces a distorted image and has other

photographers have missed. In fact, there is a much better chance of taking knock-out photos if you go to a little-known place, although it can get a bit too adventurous sometimes off the beaten track.

If you study the locality thoroughly and make your preparations well, you can get some surprisingly good results. One example is



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limitations, you need to be careful in using it.

Q: How do you get new ideas and incorporate them into your work?

A: This doesn't really have much to do with photographic skills, yet it is a basic requirement for getting good pictures. We think that advance preparation is most important. Books, newspapers, pictorials, local historical records, all provide a lot of material and clues to stimulate our ideas and help us determine a basic theme.

This, of course, is only in theory. On the spot we may well encounter unforeseen difficulties or, alternatively, realize that some other approach would be preferable. When we reach our destination, we make local contacts; we normally have a local guide. We ask questions and listen, and thereby gain more background knowledge.

One of our most difficult tasks is when we feature a beauty spot which has already been photographed many, many times before. You have to weigh up all the possibilities carefully and try to go for an angle which other

Anhui's Yixian County, featured in CHINA TOURISM no. 90. The photojournalist had not planned to take any photos but, when he got there, he was most impressed by the local traditions. So he read up about Yixian and worked out a new plan, producing the article 'Land of Peach Blossom Spring'.

Another example? The naked boat trackers on western Hubei's River Shennong, covered in CHINA TOURISM no. 103 in 'Song of the Shennong Boatmen'. Again, it was only when our photojournalist was on the spot that he learned about the trackers and realized their striking photographic potential, so he decided to stay there for a few days and concentrate on them.

Obviously you need an adventurous spirit and determination to carry this sort of project through. It can even be dangerous at times. For the Mount Huangshan feature in CHINA TOURISM no. 90, one photojournalist decided he would never be able to capture the full grandeur of the mountain from inside the cable car, so he perched himself on top — roped on, of course — and worked in the clouds, with excellent results.

Sometimes you find your plan is impossible to carry out when you are confronted with actual conditions. In issue no. 96 the main article is 'By Hide Raft Down the Yellow River'. When the photojournalist got to where he had planned to take a goatskin raft down the river in Ningxia, he found that part of the river nothing like as



exciting as he'd expected. Luckily, he was able to find a raft loaded with pears and accompany its team of seasoned raftsmen through the Heishan Gorge.

Another consideration is that some objects which are very attractive can photograph badly. Some historical relics, for example. If the available light is inadequate or if the object itself is rather dull in colour, it will not come out well. Here technique is all-important. Sometimes, though, regardless of all your technical skill and care, the object just does not work in print. It's a waste of your time and film.

Q: What do you do if the weather or the season is not right for your project?

A: We have to work in any weather. But the weather does sometimes limit you, especially in landscape photography. If you want a picture of a tree thick with icicles, you obviously need quite definite conditions — a freezing cold day after a slight thaw! Or another example: if the Yangtse Valley in mist is what you're after, you need to aim to be there in the rainy season. So your timing has to be appropriate for your project from the start.

But if your general aim is to bring out the true nature of some place, the weather does not play such an important role. As long as you capture its essence, your photos will be interesting anyway.



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relics, arts and crafts — or we interview people, collect back-up material for the article, etc.

Q: If you are forbidden to take photos of certain subjects, is there a way of getting round the problem?

A: This usually happens under four circumstances: 1) historical relics which it is illegal to photograph; 2) special local customs such as

Some photojournalists use super-wide-angle lenses, high-speed film and other tricks to take pictures of people without their knowledge or approval. Some also try to escape the notice of strict museum guards, etc., by feinting — taking photos in the opposite direction to where they are facing, under their arm, for example.

We do not encourage such practices. For a start, the quality of the photos is likely to suffer. And what happens if you're caught? You might get fined, your film might be confiscated. You might even get into a confrontation with the police or the local authorities, and then you are really in trouble. Your whole project is doomed. It's not sensible to take such risks for doubtful results.

As regards objects or historical relics on which the government has placed a photography ban, we approach certain mainland organizations for help, or submit an advance claim for the necessary approval. We also carry letters of introduction. Then, if we should come across an unreasonable official or other person, we explain our intentions patiently and try to make him or her understand, while flourishing the letter of introduction. There are no hard and fast rules on how to overcome this sort of problem. It depends on experience. But one thing's sure: you need a lot of patience!

Translated by Wang Mingjie



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Even if you happen to get a bad day when you don't want it, you can often still turn it to your advantage. 'Zhaoqing's Seven Star Craggs' in CHINA TOURISM no. 107 contains a rainy landscape; but the tourists in their colourful raincoats add much charm to the scene. As the saying goes: 'A loss may turn out to be a gain.'

If the weather really is too bad to work in, we have no choice but to alter our timetable. Maybe we concentrate on indoor shots — historical

'celestial burials' in Tibet; 3) simple people such as hawkers who are not sure of our intentions; and 4) people who refuse to be photographed for personal reasons. We do, of course, have to abide by the law and respect local customs and peoples' rights and feelings.

- 1 A night shot camouflages all the uglier bits, so that even an ordinary Shanghai street can look glamorous
- 2 Our photographer braved the nippy wind to capture this study, the grey tones evoking all the atmosphere of a winter's dawn in Qiqihar, Heilongjiang
- 3 A storm provides a most unusual subject as fishermen hoist a small boat out of danger's reach near Dalian, Liaoning
- 4 On a drizzly day the light can be soft and even, perfect for bringing out the colours of the fields, as seen at Qingyang, Anhui



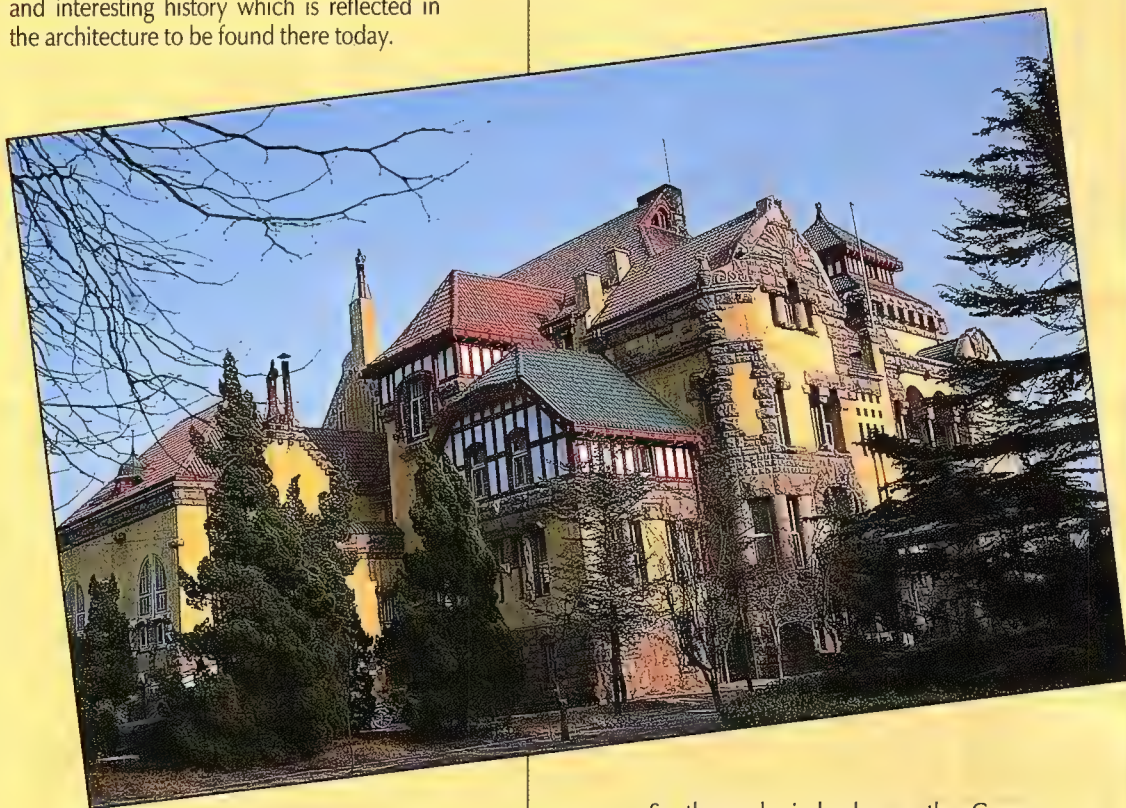
Qingdao and Laoshan

Mention the name Tsingtao to any expatriate resident of Hong Kong or foreign visitor to China and he or she will probably think of the excellent lager which bears that name. The chances are that many of those who are familiar with Tsingtao beer are quite unfamiliar with the city in Shandong Province after which it is named.

This is not altogether surprising since the current Pinyin spelling for the city is 'Qingdao', although the older spelling has been retained for the beer's name.

Despite being a fairly young city (a hundred years ago it was an obscure fishing village), Qingdao has an unusually complex and interesting history which is reflected in the architecture to be found there today.

(established in 1891 by the Chinese) and some fishing villages. The whole area was known as Kiao-chou (Jiaozhou). The name Qingdao (meaning 'Green Island') was that of one of the fishing villages. It had been borrowed from the name of a small island which lies in the bay of one of the present-day bathing beaches. With their characteristic thoroughness, the Germans wasted no time in constructing a modern city, port and seaside resort designed to provide for their every need. The famous brewery went into production shortly after the Germans commenced their occupation.



It was in the closing years of the last century that Germany, at that time one of the main European powers seeking to carve out for themselves concessions and spheres of influence in China, demanded a 99-year lease over a portion of eastern Shandong Province. China, weakened as it was by the corruption and incompetence which plagued the dying years of the Qing dynasty, was in no position to refuse.

The Germans took possession in 1898 of an area of 193 square miles containing a large natural harbour, a small naval station

So thorough, indeed, was the German building effort that even today, over seventy-five years after the Germans lost control of the city, much of the central and seafront districts have an unmistakable German appearance. Notable buildings which clearly date from the German era include the railway station, the Bavarian-style twin-spired Catholic church and the former German governor's residence. The strong German influence on the architecture of Qingdao is all the more remarkable when one considers that German control of the city and surrounding areas lasted only sixteen years.



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Since 1945 the city has enjoyed an unparalleled period of stability which has helped it to expand to become the major industrial centre of Shandong Province, with a population of three million. Brewing still forms an important part of the local economy together with traditional heavy industry such as railway locomotive construction, but it has also diversified into light industry (cameras, TVs, etc.). In recent years, tourism has been of increasing importance.

For most visitors it is probably the fine sandy beaches (six in number) that are the main attraction of Qingdao. At the time of my visit in April the daytime temperature was hovering around 10 degrees Celsius, too cold for swimming or sunbathing. Nonetheless there were many visitors sitting on the beaches enjoying the bracing air and the fresh spring sunshine. Others were taking strolls along the promenades, practising taijiquan or fishing from the rocks or pier. A portrait photographer (complete with box camera) who had stationed himself on the pier was doing brisk business. In some ways I found myself being reminded of childhood seaside holidays spent in the U.K. in the 1950s and 60s. Not only were the ways in which the visitors spent their time (and money) similar, but much of the architecture would not have looked out of place in an English seaside resort.

Apart from the buildings and the beer and the beaches, there is one other attraction of Qingdao that I would urge all visitors to take a trip to see. This is the Laoshan Range which, lying only thirty or so kilometres to the east of the city, is well within day-trip distance. The mountain itself towers to 1,113 metres so that

an ascent up the stepped path to the top demands reasonable fitness and stamina. The route to the mountain range lies along a spectacular coastal road which hugs the shoreline much of the way, passing beneath towering cliffs and alongside sandy bays and fishing villages. There are many local tours available from Qingdao to Laoshan. I would, however urge those who wish to attempt to climb Laoshan to leave the city early in the day. Also, if possible, take a tour that allows sufficient time for you to climb the mountain. If you cannot find a decent map of the mountain itself (I could not), then it may be possible to hire a local guide. I did not succeed in climbing the mountain, having encountered the various problems referred to, and had to content myself with an ascent of the lower slopes only. I do know, however, of foreigners who have reached the top and have been rewarded with superb views.

If you are looking for something different in China — a place with recent history that is still very much in evidence as you look around you; a place with fresh air, fine beaches and the chance for some mountain-climbing nearby, perhaps followed by some excellent beer — then Qingdao may be the answer.

Andrew Stables



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The one-time German governor's residence (1). A fine catch (2) and morning taijijian (swordplay) beside Qingdao Bay (4). View over a naval base along the coast (3) and the old road to Laoshan (5).

Notes on Lake Poyang

In addition to the vagaries of its surface area and volume, the climate on and around Lake Poyang is also variable. The weather here is mild in winter and hot in summer. The temperature is generally higher in the evening than in the morning, since the lake waters absorb heat slowly and release it equally slowly. It rains more frequently in the morning than in the evening, although the mean annual rainfall is only 1,400-1,500 millimetres. The best time to visit the lake is considered to be the autumn, with temperatures averaging 20°C during the day and 10°C at night.

The lake often has very windy conditions. West of the lake rise Mount Lushan and Mount Mufu, and there are also mountains to the east, which act as screens. When cold air enters the lake from the north, it has to traverse a narrow funnel, creating strong winds. The winds are particularly violent in the vicinity of the Laoye Temple in Duchang County, where the lake is only three kilometres across at the narrowest point. The many shipwrecks in this area may well be part of the reason why the fisherfolk still flock to make offerings to the temple's god as their protector.

Probably the best way to see the sights of the lake is by boat. The Jiujiang branch of China Travel Service (CTS) has a new charter launch service but it does have to be arranged in advance. The ideal solution would be for a group of friends to get together as this obviously reduces the cost per person. However, it is also possible to make a tour of the lake by public transport. There are boat services between eleven county towns and cities around the lake, with greatest frequency during the summer months, when the water level is at its highest. The major water transport centres are Hukou, Wucheng, Xingzi, Duchang, Ruihong and Boyang. The best hotels are to be found in Wucheng, Xingzi and Hukou.

From Hong Kong, independent travellers can fly direct to Nanchang or Wuhan, then

take a train or boat to Jiujiang to gain access to the Lake Poyang area. After a few days in Jiujiang and on Mount Lushan, take a bus to the lakeside town of Xingzi at the southeastern foot of the mountain. From here, it is only one hour by boat to Wucheng. Since this old town is only accessible by water, the next step is either by boat to Yongxiu along the Laohe followed by train to Nanchang, or direct to Nanchang along the River Ganjiang. The provincial capital has a number of sights, including the newly reconstructed Tengwang Tower (see CHINA TOURISM no. 123). From Nanchang take a

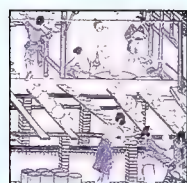
boat to Ruihong in Yugan County at the southern tip of the lake; it has a most photogenic fishing fleet.

Starting up the eastern side of the lake, continue by bus to Yugan itself, then to Boyang, famous for its opera troupe. Take a boat or bus to Duchang and continue by bus to Zhoudi, from where the Laoye Temple is accessible by another bus. Back to Duchang, from where a bus will take you up to Hukou and the River Yangtse and thence back to Jiujiang. Extensions to Jingdezhen, Leping, Yingtan and Fuzhou are possible by combinations of bus and train.





Jingdezhen



Getting There

From Hong Kong, you can get to Jingdezhen by air (1 hour 15 minutes), by rail, by road, or by sea then train. Please see tables for details of schedules.

By air: One-way flight Hong Kong-Nanchang HK\$930; Guangzhou-Nanchang HK\$435 (tickets available from China Travel Service (Hong Kong) Ltd. — tel. 853-3472. There is also a charter flight between Hong Kong and Nanchang: tickets and information from Jiangxi (Hong Kong) Tourist Co. Ltd. (tel. 543-8432). From Nanchang to Jingdezhen is 300 km on the Anhui-Jiangxi railway line, or this stretch can be covered by long-distance bus (air-con or not) — fare 12.40 or 6.70 yuan.

By rail: There are several changes of train involved. Starting on the Guangzhou-Beijing railway line from Guangzhou, you need to change at Zhuzhou to the Zhejiang-Jiangxi line, then at Yingtan to the Anhui-Jiangxi line, which will deposit you at Jingdezhen. Hard seat HK\$219, hard sleeper HK\$271, soft sleeper HK\$397 (Guangzhou-Jingdezhen 1,337 km).

By sea: Hong Kong-Xiamen by ship, then take train no. 316 (dep. 08:23) to Jingdezhen, or trains nos. 476 (dep. 13:25) or 76 (dep. 12:35) with a change at Yingtan.

By bus: It is possible to take a long-distance bus from Guangzhou Railway Station to Ganzhou, a town in southern Jiangxi (541 km). Air-con bus 40 yuan. From Ganzhou, take a bus to Jingdezhen (433 km). Air-con bus 30 yuan; non-air-con 15 yuan.

Suggested Tour of Jingdezhen

Below we outline a possible two-day itinerary. Since Renmin (People's) Square is the centre of the city, it is best to stay in one of the hotels there: Jingdezhen Hotel or Cicheng (Porcelain Capital) Hotel.

Day one: From Renmin Square, proceed along Lianshe Road North for 500 metres to the **Jingdezhen Porcelain Exhibition Centre**, where a wide range of porcelain and pottery is on display. Built in 1954, the exhibition hall

encapsulates 2,000 years of Chinese ceramics in tens of thousands of porcelain pieces, ancient and modern. About 500 metres further north along the same road is **Lianhuatang (Lotus Pond) Park**.

Taking Fengjing Road and passing Doufu Lane you come to the River Changjiang and the **Jiangbian (Riverside) Park**, a pleasant place to wander with its tree-shaded zigzag path paved with multicoloured porcelain shards. Crossing the river by a pontoon bridge, you arrive at the Renmin Park where you will find the **Wufeng (Five Phoenix) Pagoda** and the **Yanbo (Cloud and Wave) Hall**.

Back across the river are the **Sanlü Temple** and the **Ming-Dynasty Street**. The former is a temple built in the Tang dynasty (618-907) and dedicated to Qu Yuan, a patriot and poet of the State of Chu of the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.). The Ming-Dynasty Street preserves the architectural style of that dynasty (1368-1644). The eighty-metre-long street is paved with granite and the houses, shops, archways, ancestral temple and former government buildings are also of stone.

Walking south along Xinhua Road North to Panlong (Coiled Dragon) Ridge on Mount Fengshu, you arrive at the **Ancient Ceramic and Porcelain Exhibition Area**. To the east is the Ceramics Museum, to the west the Ancient Porcelain Factory. The **Ceramics Museum** is housed in an old architectural complex named Qing-Dynasty Garden and Ming-Dynasty Lane. There are four buildings in the Qing section, in the middle of which is the Yuhuashi Memorial Hall with, further back, Dafudi — the former home of an official. The Ming section contains residential buildings, a village gate, shops and a water-side pavilion. A large quantity of ancient porcelain is on display.

The **Ancient Porcelain Factory** close to the museum has ten pottery workshops and an ancient wood-fired kiln capable of producing over 60,000 pieces of porcelain a year. You can watch the entire process. Also

recommended is a visit to a small workshop in a lovely setting in a Ming-dynasty garden where ceramics were once produced for the imperial household. You can have a go yourself and acquire precious souvenirs.

After returning to Jingdezhen, visit the busiest commercial section along Central Zhushan Road, where there are many porcelain stores, including the **Jingdezhen Porcelain Friendship Store** and the sales department of the **Ceramic Industry Company**.

In the evening, it's fun to stroll through the **Porcelain Night Market** which springs up on Lianshe Road South, south of Renmin Square. It consists of some sixty pavilions manned by private traders, while up to 300 hawkers spread their wares on the pavement. If you hope to get any bargains, however, be prepared to haggle. The initial asking price is up to 50% higher than it should be and you need to keep a lookout for damaged and below-quality wares — be warned!

Day Two: Take a bus to the **Old City of Jingdezhen**, ten kilometres away — a twenty-minute ride. This was a county town in the Tang dynasty and a walled city during the Yuan, Ming and Qing. All that is left of the walls now are a few ruins. The most attractive sight here is the Tang-dynasty **Hongta (Red Pagoda)**, a seven-storeyed hexagonal structure built of bricks and wood. Thirty-nine metres high, the pagoda has red walls which give it its name. Behind it stands a *yamen*, a county magistrate's office, dating from the Qing dynasty. One kilometre further north lies a small ridge, the site of the ruined Tang-dynasty Baoji Monastery.

Return to Jingdezhen for lunch, then take a bus to the **Hutian Ancient Porcelain Kiln** in the village of Hutian at the foot of Nanshan Hill, five kilometres east of the city. The kiln site covers 400,000 square metres. It was operative from the Five Dynasties (907-960) to the mid-Ming — a period of some 700 years.

Translated by He Fei

Wuyuan

Wuyuan County is situated in the north-eastern corner of Jiangxi Province, not far from Mount Huangshan in Anhui Province. Nowadays, it is quite easy to reach the county town of Wuyuan, Ziyang, which is a few hours by road from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi or from Tunxi in Anhui.

Getting There

From Hong Kong, the fastest and most convenient way is to fly from Guangzhou to Mount Huangshan, and then take the three-hour bus ride from Mount Huangshan to Wuyuan. Or take a train on the Guangzhou-Shanghai Railway to Shangrao in eastern Jiangxi, then change to a bus to Ziyang. The bus journey takes about four to five hours and buses are frequent.

A trip to Wuyuan County can easily be combined into a larger itinerary. For example, you could first travel to places south of the River Yangtse such as Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou. From Hangzhou, take a long-distance bus to Mount Huangshan and stop there for two or three days before continuing to Wuyuan. After Wuyuan, you could choose between the newly-developed scenic area of Mount Sanqing to the south or the ancient kiln workshops at Jingdezhen before visiting Mount Lushan and Lake Poyang. A plane or train from Jiujiang or Nanchang will take you back to Hong Kong.

Ziyang and Scenic Routes

On a map, Wuyuan County looks like a leaf, with Ziyang at its centre. The rivers flowing from the east, west and north are like veins converging at Ziyang. The main scenic spots of Wuyuan County are scattered along these three river valleys, which are served by buses. Generally, it takes only two hours from Ziyang to any other place within the county. It is a pity that there is still no travel agency in Wuyuan County and the tourism aspect has not yet been developed, so there is nowhere to rent a car,

making travellers dependent on public transportation.

The three routes are named after their main scenic spots — the Duanxin Route in the east, the Zheyuan Route in the north and the Xucun Route in the west. The Duanxin Route is the most scenic, especially the part from the ancient village of Qingyuan to Upper and Lower Xiaoqi,



A nuo mask (by Liu Jiangyuan)

with wonderful landscapes. At the northern end of the Zheyuan Route there are many mountains with numerous big grottoes. Likeng on the Duanxin Route, Sikou, Gutan and Zheyuan on the Zheyuan Route, and Mount Dayou and Lake Yuanyang on the Xucun Route are also well worth a visit.



Wooden carving of a fight scene (by Liu Jiangyuan)

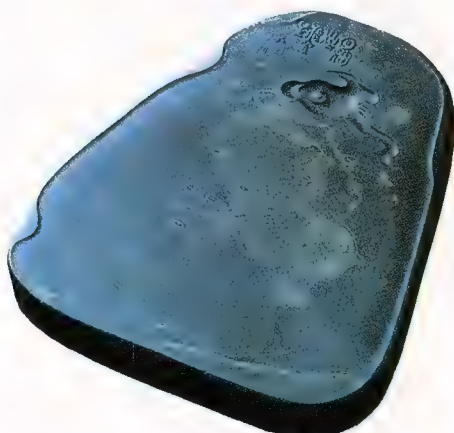
Wuyuan is famous for more than its landscapes. The groups of ancient residences, the wood carving, brick carving and stone carving, the Longwei inkstone and the nuo dance are among the best in the nation. Architectural complexes from the Ming and Qing are concentrated at Sikou, Sixi, Tuochuan, Likeng, Qinghua and Baizhu on the Zheyuan Route, Xiaoqi, Jiangwan and Likeng on the Duanxin Route, and Xucun and Zhentou on the Xucun Route. Travellers who are lovers of art and ancient architecture should contact the County Cultural Bureau in Ziyang for information and the possibility of guides to the ancient villages. Generally, the local people are very hospitable; the only problem is language.

Not far from Ziyang are the Wukou Tea Plantation and the Longwei Inkstone Factory (the name of the inkstone is derived from its origin — a mountain stream on Mount Longwei). Both these places welcome visitors; tours can be arranged through the County Cultural Bureau.

Finally, travellers to Wuyuan should not miss tasting the beancurd and 'Hebao' red carp of the area.

Tai Chi Yin

Translated by Annette Lee



Longwei inkstone (by Li Qing)



Jiangxi's Red Earth



Photo by Guo Jiasheng



Photo by Yan Jianhua

Red soil is found in many locations in the world, but especially in tropical and subtropical zones. Jiangxi Province lies on the northern rim of the subtropical zone in China. The annual monsoon from the south-east in late spring brings a tremendous wave of humidity and rainfall. Under the warm, moist conditions the rocks and minerals on the earth's surface disintegrate rapidly, forming this top layer of red soil. Three-quarters of Jiangxi's surface is covered with red earth.

Red earth tends to occur as a thick layer; it is sticky and acidic. Its clayish consistency is the result of its rich content of silicon dioxide, aluminium hydroxide and clay minerals. If the plant cover is destroyed, undulating broken ground is formed on gentle slopes. On steeper slopes, ravines may form under the influence of streams produced by rain. Should there be any unweathered rocks lying in the path of these streams, the currents eddying around them form funnel-shaped holes in the ravine. Way over to the west of Jiangxi Province, in the Jinggang Mountains, I have seen a ravine ten metres deep and four metres across formed by long-term water erosion.

Two years ago, on my way by coach from Nanchang, the provincial capital, in the north to Ruijin in the southern part of the province,

I saw many examples of red earth formations.

As we passed some hills within the territory of Fuzhou, south of Lake Poyang, I caught sight of an enormous stretch of red earth totalling several hundred hectares in area. The dried-up red earth was bare except for clusters of cogongrass, which can withstand drought. We stopped the coach and got out to take a closer look. A local man riding by also stopped and told us that this soil was 'as hard as copper on a sunny day and a mass of mud on a rainy day'. It was unsuitable for growing anything, and certainly not for crops. The rainfall over the years had formed many little gullies. This vast denuded area contrasted sharply with the surrounding greenery and woodlands.

On the stretch of road between Nancheng and Guangchang, a highway project to eliminate several sharp bends had revealed the underlying red earth. In Nanfeng County, mid-way between the two towns, where a section of the new road runs beside the river, I saw a cross-section cut out of a hillside. Since the soil was bright red, with grass and shrubs growing all around, the semi-circular cross-section looked from the distance like the sun setting in front of woods.

This cross-section allowed us to assess the thickness of the strata. The more than twenty-metre-thick layer of red earth was topped by a ten-centimetre-thick layer of a greyish-brown humus. The red earth became redder the deeper it went, and was marked with white or purplish spots of irregular shape. The gradual transition between the lower edge of the red earth stratum and the

primary rock was easy to see, proving that the red soil is indeed the result of the disintegration of the bedrock. In one place the rock protruded into the red stratum like a stalagmite; in other places it was the red earth which sagged pocket-like into the underlying rock. Pieces of granite, slate and shale dotted the red stratum like islands in the sea.

The purplish and white stripes in this cross-section were caused by unweathered quartz veins trapped in the red stratum. In addition, the feldspar contained in the bedrock had weathered into kaolin (china clay), resulting in the white streaks and spots.

To the south of the county town of Guangchang was a hill covered with sparse woods. The road winding across the hillside took us past a landslide, the result again of erosion by rain, and a very common sight in Jiangxi. In the middle of the landslide zone was a dry ravine which had been gouged out by flash floods after a storm. Around the landslide were zigzag ridges of red earth which one could clearly see would collapse further at the next storm, perpetuating the erosion. The silt was carried by the water on to the farmland.

The coach sped on across cultivated plains, past wooded hills, field terraces and embankments planted with fruit trees. This too was a red earth landscape, as could be seen from the places where the earth was exposed. Obviously, intensive cultivation can turn this heavy, acidic red soil into fertile land.

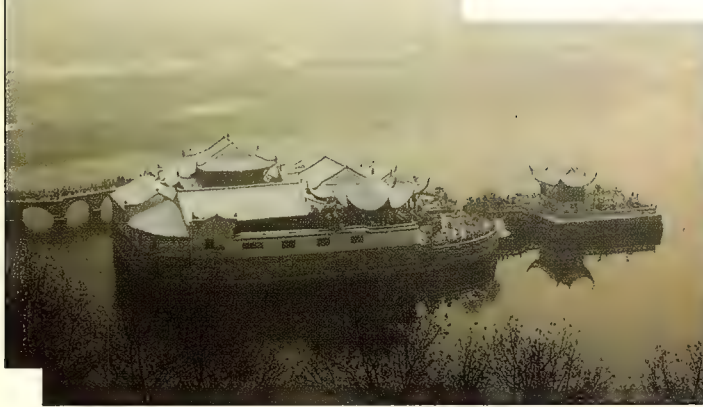
Yeung Luk Wa

Translated by Chen Jiaji

Jiangxi: Past Coverage in CHINA TOURISM

- No. 49 Charming Mountain Villages
- No. 70 Jizhou Kiln: Black Glazed Porcelain
- No. 80 Jiangxi Special (Southern Jiangxi Travels; Jinjing Mountains; Traditions and Customs of Jiangxi Province; Wengang — Village of Writing-Brushes; Jinggang Mountains; Bamboo Handicrafts; Eating Out; Tourist Routes in Northern Jiangxi)
- No. 84 The Excitement of the Dragon Boat Festival
- No. 85 American Buddhist Nuns Pay Homage (Zhenru Monastery)
- No. 123 The Tengwang Tower Rises Again
- No. 124 The Red Land

Jiujiang and Mount Lushan



Yanshui Pavilion (by Wan Xinhua)



Guling (by Xiong Yuansheng)

Set on the south bank of the River Yangtse, **Jiujiang** is named for the nine (*jiu*) rivers (*jiang*) which are said to have converged here in antiquity. There was a settlement on this site as long ago as the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.). In the early Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), a walled city surrounded by a moat was established, which continued to be a frequently contested stronghold throughout history.

During the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), Jiujiang held out against the Qing imperial armies for five years. Then, shortly after its recapture (during which it suffered extensive damage), it was thrown open as a treaty port in 1861 as a result of the treaties signed at the end of the Second Opium War. The British concession lasted until 1927, and a few buildings from that period can still be seen in the old concession area near the wharves. Jiujiang was famed as one of the three centres of the Chinese tea trade (the others being Hankou in Hubei and Fuzhou in Fujian).

Modern Jiujiang is an industrial city and river port with an urban population of around 600,000 and an overall population of almost four million. Although it is often regarded as just a jumping-off spot for Mount Lushan, it does have a few attractions of its own.

Yanshui (Mist and Water) Pavilion This graceful structure, now a museum, stands in Lake Gantang and is connected to the lake's northern shore by a zigzag causeway. The present pavilion dates from the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), but the first one on this site is said to have been built in the Tang dynasty (618-907) by Bai Juyi, the poet-official, during his quasi-exile. Embedded on the wall of the main hall is a stone tablet engraved with the huge character *shou* (longevity). This is said to have been written by Lü Dongbin, one of the Eight Immortals, who lived at the time of the Tang dynasty. In clear weather, the pavilion

affords good views of Mount Lushan rising like a screen to the west.

Nengren (Ability and Benevolence) Monastery The oldest extant group of buildings in Jiujiang. First constructed during the reign of Emperor Wudi (502-549) of the Liang dynasty, the monastery reached its peak during the Tang under the abbot Bai Yunduan. The seven-storey, hexagonal **Dasheng (Great Victory) Pagoda** beside the monastery is from the Tang, but was restored during the Tongzhi reign (1862-1874) of the Qing. It is 42 metres tall.

Lang (Wave) Well Can be seen near the waterfront. Dug in 201 B.C. during the Han dynasty, it connected with the Yangtse. It became clogged up and forgotten, but was rediscovered in the third century. It was thereupon renamed Rui (Auspicious) Well. Li Bai referred to it in one of his poems, as did Su Dongpo.

Suojiang Pagoda This Ming-dynasty pagoda, built in 1585, stands to the northeast of the city on the Yangtse embankment. Four iron ox statues once stood there too, perhaps to protect it against flooding (thought to be an attribute of the ox, like the one at the Summer Palace in Beijing), but were swept into the river during an earthquake. The seven-storeyed, hexagonal pagoda, which stands 35 metres high, was damaged in 1938.

Mount Lushan is one of Jiangxi's major tourist attractions. This long, narrow mountain range covers an area of around 300 square kilometres. Its highest peak, Hangyang, rises to 1,474 metres above sea-level — an impressive sight from the Poyang Plain below.

The mountain has a maritime climate with mild winters and cool summers. The average temperature in July is 22.6°C, in January -0.4°C. Its ample rainfall — an average of 1,833 millimetres a year, as opposed to

Jiujiang's 1,431 millimetres — means that the mountain is often shrouded in mist; there are around 192 misty days a year. The humid, cool conditions are ideal for plants and the mountain was made a nature reserve in 1979 to protect its rich forests and plant life. The conditions are good for tea-growing: the local tea, Yunwu (Misty Cloud), is said to undergo seven processes to produce its special fragrance.

Guling is the main resort centre on Lushan, around thirty kilometres from Jiujiang. Here you will find the main hotels, the CITS office, restaurants, shops and lots of possible walks. Guling can be reached by bus from Jiujiang (a two-hour ride) and from Nanchang (three to four hours). It is necessary to make an advance booking in high season.

Although Chinese poets, scholars, Taoists and Buddhists discovered the cooling breezes of Lushan centuries ago, Guling is marked by its many European-style stone cottages and churches dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when it became a hill resort for the large foreign population of Jiujiang. It became the fashionable place to take a break from the sweltering heat along the Yangtse, and Chiang Kai-shek was among those who had a villa here in the 1930s.

The most popular circuit of the mountain from Guling will take around five or six hours' walking, but Lushan has countless relics and sites of natural beauty: flying waterfalls, jagged peaks and cliffs, caverns, etc. Also on the summit are two artificial lakes — Lulin (Reed Grove) and Huajing (Floral Path) — built in 1954 and 1981 respectively in order to improve Guling's water and power supply.

Immortal's Cave (also known in English as Fairy Cave) is a natural cavern associated with an old tale about Lü Dongbin, one of the Eight Taoist Immortals. He is said to have meditated and attained immortality here at

the age of fifty. The cave houses Chunyang (Pure Masculine) Hall, and there is also a pool fed by drops of water from above which is said never to run dry.

Three Precious Trees stand below Lake Lulin. They are so big round that several people would need to link arms to embrace them. They are named thus because they were considered treasures of the nearby Huanglong (Yellow Dragon) Temple. Two of them are willows, the other a ginkgo. A stone tablet bears the inscription 'Planted by Monk Tan Shen of the Jin Dynasty' (probably the Eastern Jin dynasty from 317 to 420).

The Botanical Garden was established in 1934 and contains more than 4,000 species of trees and plants, including over 240 of the 600 odd species of pines and cypresses in the world.

Bailudong (White Deer Cave) Academy was one of the four great academies of the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Its name is derived from the story that in the Tang dynasty Li Bo from Luoyang, Henan, raised deer here as a hobby. In 825 when he



On Mount Lushan (by Li Ziqing)

became prefectural governor of Jiangzhou, he built terraces, planted flowers and channelled water into the place in which he once lived in seclusion. Zhu Xi, a Song-dynasty Confucian teacher, is credited with building up the academy. Some of its originally 360 buildings and sites, rebuilt or renovated, are open to the public.

Donglin (East Forest) Monastery This very important Buddhist monastery at the foot of Lushan, 22 kilometres from Jiujiang, is where Hui Yuan (334-417) founded the Amida sect, also known as the Pure Land or White Lotus sect. The 'pure land' referred to was the Western Paradise presided over by the benevolent Amida or Amitabha.

The monastery was first built in 386 in the Eastern Jin dynasty and, for over a thousand years, had a considerable influence on Buddhist thought. The sect's teachings were spread to Japan by Jian Zhen in the Tang dynasty, when the monastery reached its zenith, with 10,000 monks. The community is now reduced to around twenty. Priority is being given to restoration of the monastery, and five of its halls can be visited.

Jinxu (Brocade Embroidery) Valley on the path to the Immortal's Cave is said to be where the monk Hui Yuan collected his medicinal herbs. Apart from luxuriant plants and flowers, the valley boasts grotesque cliff and pine formations, 'stone forests', and numerous streams.

(Continued from page 22)

Cruising on China's Largest Freshwater Lake

ox-carts are used for transport since their over-sized wheels can cope better with the soft, spongy marshland.

We entered a narrow channel on the banks of which was a stretch of sand-dunes. It formed a striking picture: the blue of the water and the yellow sand-dunes, with a layer of green meadows sandwiched in between. Not even the captain could explain this. Later I learned from a teacher in Wucheng that it was the result of a movement of the earth tens of millions of years ago, when the sea covered all this area. The seawater eroded the places around Dajishan and Songmenshan on present-day Lake Poyang, causing the formation of these dunes.

Ancient Entrepôt

Wucheng, located at the confluence of the rivers Ganjiang and Xiushui on the western side of the lake, is one of the 'Four Famous Townships' of Jiangxi. Formerly known as Wushan, it has a history of 2,200 years. During the Ming and Qing dynasties it was a major hub of water communications in Jiangxi, far more prosperous than Ruihong. It was said to have eight wharves extending for several kilometres with boats moored seven deep, the boats' crews outnumbering the population of the township. More than forty guildhouses were set up by other provinces, prefectures and counties to cater for their respective merchants. A British firm and shipping company had branch offices there, and there were three churches run by foreign missionaries.

After 1917, when the railway opened between Nanchang and Jiujiang, Wucheng lost its significance as an entrepôt for shipment of goods to the north and finally declined as a result

of the civil war. Today, it is just a small township beside the lake with no road link to the outside world; it has a population of around four thousand, all farmers or fisherfolk.

At six o'clock in the evening the setting sun glowed blood-red. We landed at a wharf in Wucheng and put up for the night in an old inn. Next morning I woke to find the people of the township already busy. Women were carrying fowls and vegetables in baskets to market; fishermen were taking their cormorants down to the shore for the day's fishing; our hotel attendant was fetching water from the nearby well. Though Wucheng is close to the lake, all its drinking water comes from such wells, many of them a hundred years old.

After breakfast, we took a walk along the main street to visit the market. The streets are to this day paved with stone slabs, smooth and shiny, and the houses along the street are in the traditional style. We went to see the old Ji'an Guildhall near the market. Its facade was an arch, the foot of its walls overgrown with weeds. It has been deserted for ages and all that is left is part of its wooden structure, with exquisite carvings typical of the Ming-dynasty style of the regions south of the Yangtze.

Wanghu (Lake-Watching) Pavilion is not far outside the township. A four-storeyed triangular structure, it has a unique style. On each of its floors there is a balustrade painted white. Built before the Ming dynasty, it has been renovated time and again, the last time about two years before my visit. We climbed the pavilion to enjoy the panoramic view. The Ganjiang and Xiushui unite not far away, flowing into the lake. Marshes stretch away on both sides. The captain popped up again to tell us that all this area is underwater in summer.

The following morning our boat slowly moved back north towards Jiujiang, retracing the early part of our circuit of the lake. Time to say goodbye to our informative friend, the captain of the *Lushan*!

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

Bird-Watching Tours

The Lake Poyang Migratory Birds Conservation Zone is located in Jiangxi's Yongxiu County on the western side of the gigantic lake. The quickest way of getting there from the provincial capital Nanchang is to take the train to Yongxiu, then continue by boat to Wucheng, site of the conservation zone's administrative centre. Another way is to take the night boat directly from Nanchang to Wucheng.

The centre houses a library, specimen rooms, research facilities, and a reception centre which has twenty rooms for rent. Other accommodation can be found in Wucheng's hotels. At the centre there is also

a 100-metre-high lookout tower equipped with binoculars. Boats and local guides can be hired.

The best time to visit Wucheng for bird-watching purposes is between October and March. The weather is nippy then, and warm clothing is required.

The Jiujiang branch of CTS (China Travel Service) organizes special bird-watching trips every year:

- 6-day tour: direct flight from Hong Kong to Nanchang (two-hour flight), then by coach to Jiujiang; return flight from Jiujiang to Huiyang in Guangdong, north-

east of Shenzhen, and by coach to Hong Kong.

- 8-day tour: Hong Kong to Huiyang by coach, flight to Jiujiang; return the same way.

The hotels used for these tours are the Jiangxi Hotel in Nanchang, the Wucheng Hotel in Wucheng, the Nanhu Hotel in Jiujiang, and the Lushan Hotel on Mount Lushan. The tours do give the opportunity for seeing the famous scenic sights of Jiangxi as well as bird-watching.

For further information, please contact Jiangxi (Hong Kong) Tourist Co. Ltd (tel: 5438432) in Hong Kong.



Average Climatic Conditions in Poyang Lake Area

		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Jiujiang	Temperature (°C)	4.2	5.7	10.3	16.5	21.4	25.5	29.4	28.9	24.2	18.5	12.5	6.7
	Rainfall (mm)	54.5	93.8	139.6	177.3	304.7	226.1	137.1	125.2	77.4	69.1	62.8	44.7
Duchang	Temperature (°C)	4.4	6.0	10.7	16.5	21.5	25.4	29.3	29.1	24.6	18.9	12.6	6.8
	Rainfall (mm)	47.3	90.1	138.7	207.9	215.4	244.7	140.5	108.8	59.0	46.5	51.9	41.1
Nanchang	Temperature (°C)	5.0	6.4	10.9	17.1	21.8	25.7	29.6	29.2	24.3	19.1	13.1	7.5
	Rainfall (mm)	58.3	95.1	163.9	225.5	301.9	291.1	125.9	103.2	75.8	55.4	53.0	47.2

Flights to and from Nanchang

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Beijing-Nanchang	2 3 4 5 7	14:30	17:05	CA1511
Nanchang-Beijing	2 3 4 5 7	18:05	20:30	CA1512
Guangzhou-Nanchang	7	16:35	17:50	CZ3535
	2 5	15:25	16:50	MU5362
	1 3 4 6 7	16:00	18:00	MU5348
	1 3 4 6 7	10:25	12:25	MU5312
Nanchang-Guangzhou	7	08:35	19:50	CE3536
	2 5	13:25	14:50	MU5361
	1 3 4 6 7	07:50	09:50	MU5311
	1 3 4 6 7	13:15	15:15	MU5347
Ningbo-Nanchang	3 6	18:50	20:40	MU5574
Nanchang-Ningbo	3 6	08:30	10:20	MU5573
Shanghai-Nanchang	2 5	07:15	08:40	MU5505
	1 4 7	19:10	21:00	MU5510
Nanchang-Shanghai	2 5	17:25	18:40	MU5506
	1 4 7	08:05	09:55	MU5509
Wuhan-Nanchang	2 5	15:25	16:35	MU5220
	2 4 6	07:55	09:10	CZ3851
	1 3 5 7	07:45	09:00	CZ3551
Nanchang-Wuhan	2 5	07:55	09:05	MU5219
	2 4 6	15:00	16:05	MU3852
	1 3 5 7	14:10	15:15	CZ3552
Xiamen-Nanchang	2 4 6	12:35	14:20	CZ3852
	1 2 3 5 6	19:00	20:50	MU5582
Nanchang-Xiamen	1 5 7	14:20	16:50	CZ3853
	2 4 6	09:40	11:35	CZ3851
	1 2 3 5 6	07:30	09:20	MU5581
Xi'an-Nanchang	2 5	12:40	16:35	MU5220
Nanchang-Xi'an	2 5	07:55	09:40	MU5219

(Valid Winter 1990—Spring 1991)

Direct Charter Flights Hong Kong — Nanchang

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.	Fare (HK\$)
Hong Kong — Nanchang	2 5	11:35	12:50	MU5018	930
Nanchang — Hong Kong	2 5	09:30	10:45	MU5017	930

Jiangxi's Cities and Counties Open to Foreign Tourists

Anyuan C	安遠縣	Ruijin C	瑞金縣
Chongren C	崇仁縣	Shanggao C	上高縣
Chongyi C	崇義縣	Shangyou C	上猶縣
Dexing C	德興縣	Shicheng C	石城縣
Dongxiang C	東鄉縣	Suichuan C	遂川縣
Fengcheng C	豐城縣	Taihe C	泰和縣
Fengxin C	奉新縣	Tonggu C	銅鼓縣
Fuzhou	撫州市	Wanzai C	萬載縣
Ganxian C	贛縣	Wuyuan C	婺源縣
Ganzhou	贛州市	Xingan C	新干縣
Guangchang C	廣昌縣	Xingguo C	興國縣
Ji'an	吉安市	Xinyu	新余市
Ji'an C	吉安縣	Xunwu C	尋烏縣
Jing'an C	靖安縣	Yanshan C	鉛山縣
Jingdezhen	景德鎮市	Yichun	宜春市
Jinggangshan	井崗山市	Yifeng C	宜豐縣
Jinxi C	金溪縣	Yihuang C	宜黃縣
Jiujiang	九江市	Yingtan	鷹潭市
Le'an C	樂安縣	Yiyang C	弋陽縣
Lichuan C	黎川縣	Yongfeng C	永豐縣
Nanchang	南昌市	Yongxin C	永新縣
Nancheng C	南城縣	Zhangshu	樟樹市
Nanfeng C	南豐縣		
Ninggang C	寧崗縣		
Pingxiang	萍鄉市		
Quannan C	全南縣		

Note:

C: County

Train Schedules Nanjing — Jingdezhen — Yingtan — Nanchang

365 O.	315 O.	313 O.	Train Station	No.	314 O.	316 O.	366 O.
14:06	17:32	21:06	Nanjing West		16:01	20:07	
14:24	17:52	21:27	Nanjing		15:51	19:57	10:11
16:01	19:21	23:04	Ma'anshan		13:44	17:47	08:21
17:41	20:46	00:28	Wuhu		12:35	16:32	06:58
19:06	22:05	01:46	Xuancheng		11:06	14:51	05:34
20:02	23:00	02:41	Ningguo		10:08	13:53	04:36
21:52	00:55	04:49	Jixi		08:16	12:07	02:40
22:24	01:30	05:24	Shexian		07:28	11:17	01:50
23:01	02:02	06:01	Tunxi		07:00	10:49	01:13
23:26	—	06:36	Xiuning		06:30	—	00:44
00:40	03:18	07:36	Qimen		05:28	09:23	23:37
03:16	06:04	09:57	Jingdezhen		03:10	06:49	21:10
05:30	08:10	11:42	Wannian		01:13	04:54	19:06
06:50	10:28	12:54	Guixi		00:58	03:42	17:40
07:45	11:21	13:41	Yingtan		23:20	03:12	17:07
		15:36	Jinxian		21:22		
	To Xiamen	16:34	Xiangtang		20:24		
		17:10	Nanchang		19:34		

Train Schedules Nanchang — Jiujiang

583 O.	581 O.	385 O.	Train Station	No.	386 O.	582 O.	584 O.
18:32	08:10	11:39	Nanchang		20:50	20:30	10:30
18:54	08:32	11:59	Nanchang North		—	20:10	10:10
20:36	09:54	12:59	Yongxiu (Tujiafu)		19:46	19:34	08:46
21:52	11:12	13:54	De'an		18:56	17:23	07:22
23:49	13:13	15:34	Jiujiang		17:23	15:02	05:30

O. — Ordinary passenger train

Hotels and Guesthouses in Jiangxi Province

Location	Name	Address	Telephone	Tariff (+) (FEC)
Nanchang	Jiangxi Hotel	Bayi Avenue	67891-9	—
	Qingshanhu Hotel	Fifth Jiaotong Road	64901-9	50-120
	Nanchang Hotel	2 Bayi Avenue, Laofushan	64811	—
Jingdezhen	Jingdezhen Hotel	8 Lianhuatang	4927	100
	Nanhu Hotel	28 Nanhu Road	225041	62
Jiujiang	Lulin Hotel	Near Lake Lulin, Guling, Lushan	282120	62
	Lushan Hotel	Hexi Road, Lushan	2932	—
	Lushan Building	Hedong Road, Lushan	282178	62
	Yunzhong Hotel	Henan Road, Lushan	2746	—
	Guling Hotel	Hexi Road, Lushan	2435	—
Hukou	Hukou Hotel	Inside the county seat	County Switchboard	—
Xingzi	Xiufeng Hotel	Xiufeng Scenic Area	County Switchboard	30
Yugan	Huangjinpu Guesthouse	Inside the county seat	County Switchboard	12-18
Yongxiu	Lake Poyang Migratory Birds Conservation Zone Administration Guesthouse	Wucheng Town	—	—
Wuyuan	Wuyuan Hotel	Inside the county seat	—	30

Nanning Airport Reopened

The airport at Nanning, capital of southwestern China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is now open again after nine months' work to upgrade its runways. Air China has a scheduled flight between Beijing and Nanning on Mondays and Wednesdays, and is adding a further flight on Saturdays from November 1.

The Great Wall's Great Fun Race

Scheduled for May 1991, the Great Fun Race on the Great Wall is an attempt to expand interest in China as a tourist destination. An agreement to stage this sporting event with a difference was signed in August 1990 between China International Travel Service Head Office, Holiday Club International (Australasia) Pty. Ltd. and Beijing Mutianyu Great Wall at the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing.

The race will take place at Mutianyu, 73 kilometres northeast of Beijing proper on the boundaries of Huairou County, and will be divided into three distance classes: two kilometres, four kilometres and seven kilometres. Runners will run in groups of ten to fifteen and will start every half-hour. Heats will be held for nine to ten months before the big race takes place on a date so far unspecified.

Air Travel News

A new air route has been launched between Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu, and Xiamen via Fuzhou in Fujian. It is operated by the Nanjing Airline under China United Airlines, and Chinese-built Yun-7 planes are used. There are two flights a week, Mondays and Thursdays, with departures at 9 a.m. from Nanjing and 1 p.m. from Xiamen.

New Guangzhou Landmark

The former Huaqiao Dasha (Overseas Chinese Mansion) near Haizhu Square in Guangzhou will reopen in late 1990 with a very different face and a new name — the **Hotel Landmark**.

The luxury 39-storey, 900-room hotel in a striking diamond shape is the brain-child of China Travel Service, Guangdong Branch, and Leong Heng Keng, deputy president of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The hotel will have extensive facilities including a library, music club, snooker room, *karaoke* lounge and sundry restaurants serving Chinese and Western cuisine. There will also be a garden-style swimming pool, shopping centre and recreation centre, and even a helipad.

'Beauty of China'

A 280-page large-format photo album of the above name has just been published in Chinese, English and Japanese. It features the varied scenery of China's provinces and regions and the special features of China's fifty-six nationalities. The photos are arranged in six geographical divisions — North China, Northwest China, Coastal Areas, Changjiang (Yangtze) River Valley, Southwest China and Northeast China — each representing a major tour route.

Western Jiangxi's Transport Improvements

Between 1927 and 1929, the remote Jinggang Mountains in southwestern Jiangxi bordering Hunan proved the ideal revolutionary base for such leaders as Mao Zedong and Zhu De.

Now, to boost the local economy, a network of highways, railways, water and air transport is being established. The mountain area, centred on the town of Jinggangshan, has three trunk roads leading to Nanchang, the provincial capital, in the northeast, to Hunan and Guangdong in the west, and to Fujian Province in the south. Buses now link 95% of the towns and 70% of the villages in the area. A 160-million-yuan railway line between Nanchang and Ji'an (a city northeast of Jinggangshan) is scheduled for completion in 1992. In addition, Taihe Airport south of Ji'an is apparently starting to receive international flights.

China's Commerce

A pictorial Chinese-English album entitled *China's Commerce*, edited and published by the Ministry of Commerce, was brought out this September. Among the information it contains is a detailed breakdown of the Ministry's internal structure. The book is intended as a handbook for journalists covering China's commercial sector as well as a reference for the general public.

Ningxia's Xumishan Grottoes

Some of China's most famous Buddhist cave-temples — the Xumishan (Mt. Sumeru) Grottoes — have been reopened to the general public. They are located in the mountains in the southern part of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, some fifty kilometres northwest of Guyuan, about a five-hour drive from the region's capital, Yinchuan.

Construction of the caves started around 470 during the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534) of the Northern Dynasties, a particularly important period for the spread of Buddhism in China, and continued until the Tang dynasty (618-907). After centuries of erosion, wars and an earthquake in 1920, only twenty of the 130 odd caves are still in good condition. Grotto No. 51 from the Northern Zhou (557-581) boasts three giant Buddhas, while Grottoes Nos. 45 and 46 contain many statues darkened by centuries of incense-burning by travellers passing along the Silk Road to and from Chang'an (present-day Xi'an in Shaanxi). Inscriptions added during the Tang, Song, Western Xia, Jin and Ming dynasties provide valuable material for study of the grottoes through the ages.

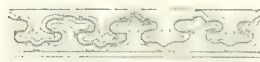
For Beijing Opera Buffs

The Liyuan Theatre has just opened at the Qianmen Hotel in southern Beijing. It is jointly run by the hotel management and the Beijing Opera Troupe. The theatre, which is laid out in traditional Qing-dynasty style, will offer opera performances every single night of the year. Next to it is an exhibition hall with costumes, masks, weapons and other props. With the staff's expert assistance, visitors can apply stage make-up and don Beijing opera costumes for souvenir photographs.



Shanghai Centre Grand Opening

The Shanghai Centre celebrated its grand opening on October 13. Combining the resources of three major international companies — American International Group, Inc., The Portman Companies and Kajima Corporation — this residential and commercial complex on Nanjing Road in the heart of Shanghai offers superior standards and a vast range of facilities. It comprises apartments, offices, a shopping plaza, an exhibition hall, a theatre, sports facilities, an advanced telecommunications system ... and **The Portman Shanghai**, a luxury hotel managed by Shangri-La International Hotel Management Ltd.



Complaints Hotline

Visitors to China can now voice their displeasure in nine cities and provinces in Chinese, Japanese or English. Complaints are channelled to the National Tourism Administration, which will try to assist the tourists. The phone numbers are as follows:

Beijing	(01) 513.0828
Shanghai	(021) 439.0630
Tianjin	(022) 31.8814 or 31.8812
Jiangsu	(025) 30.1221
Zhejiang	(0571) 55.6631
Guangdong	(020) 67.7422
Shaanxi	(029) 71.1480
Gansu	(0931) 26860
Guilin	(0773) 226533



Telecom Network Extended

China's domestic direct dialling (DDD) network was completed this past September with the final link to Lhasa, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

The network links 606 cities across the country and serves over 60% of long-distance domestic phone calls. According to the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, there are now 900,000 telephones with DDD and 350,000 telephones with IDD (international direct dialling) facilities in China.

Portable telephone networks made their debut in 1988. There are currently sixteen stations and 240 high-frequency commercial channels servicing 6,000 to 7,000 subscribers.

In addition, Hong Kong's IDD service can access a further 165 cities in China since the beginning of October.

NEXT ISSUE

TAIWAN STRAITS SPECIAL



Pioneer traders from the seaboard cities of mountainous Fujian were largely responsible for laying the foundations for the establishment of Chinese farming communities on the fertile western plains of Taiwan. We explore both sides of the Straits in this issue, turning up links between Fujian and Taiwan.



- Birthday Celebrations for a Goddess
 - Where the Legend Was Born: Maitzou Island
 - Maitzou Fever Sweeps Taiwan
- A Taiwan Trio:
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